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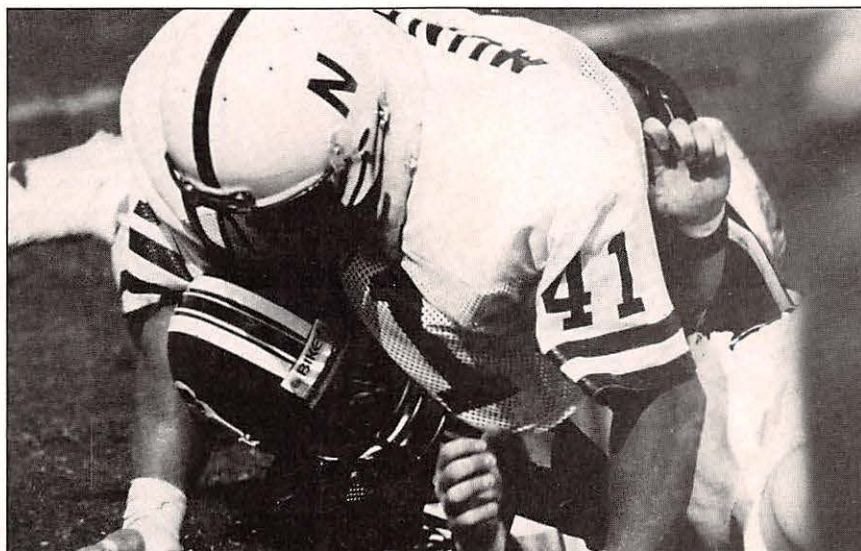
BEST
OFFENSIVE LINE
EVER?



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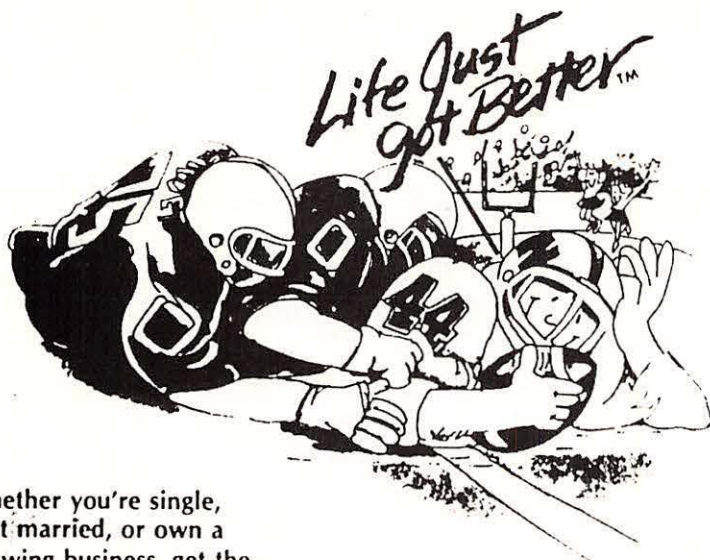
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Huskers Illustrated



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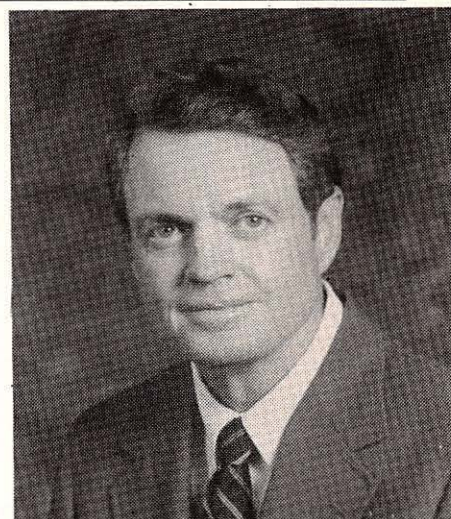
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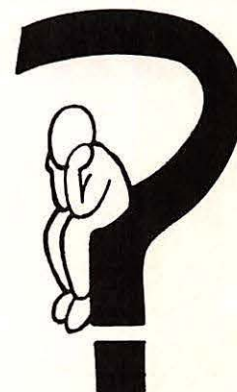
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LETTERS

CLEAN SLATE

Dear Huskers:

My hat is off to the stellar Nebraska football program yet again. As we enter yet another football season, I notice that Coach Thomas Osborne and his soldiers have climbed to the upper limits of the prediction polls and have done it in a gentlemanly and ethical manner. It seems to me we play a ferocious schedule of equally talented clubs, but there's one major difference. Just look at Texas A&M, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State, and you'll see that our honored competitors of 1988 have reached their success with NCAA allegations flapping behind them. Literally, they have paid quite a high price for their success.

But that's not the case in Nebraskaland. And that's quite comforting. Here's to Tom Terrific!
Mike Mobra
Seattle, Wash.

I-BACKWARDS

Dear Huskers:

I would like to see the Huskers play Leodis Flowers this year. I think he is an outstanding I-back, in the mold of Mike Rozier and Doug DuBose. We have many good I-backs this year, including George Achola, but I feel Leodis has the best combination of speed and killer instinct. Also, the Husker coaches might consider playing Steve Taylor at halfback in the wishbone because he is so fast, and he could throw option passes that nobody could defend.

David Hubbard
Omaha, Neb.

R.I.P.

Dear Huskers:

I am again looking forward to another great team from Coach Tom Osborne and the Huskers, especially Steve Taylor and Broderick Thomas. I am sure they will represent the state

of Nebraska in fine fashion as they march to the Orange Bowl. This is a new year and a new team, and that's why I wish the national media would stop harping on 1987 when our young men spoke so boldly.

I wasn't too thrilled to hear these comments because I believe in the football theory that you shouldn't give your opponent any ammunition to put on the bulletin board. Love them to death before the game and then tear them up on the field on the day of the game, is my motto. But the main thing is that those quotes are long gone, and I'm sure Taylor and Thomas and Coach Osborne have all learned something from it. So, why do the newspapers and TV keep saying Taylor's got to play as good as he talks?

They must think last year's quotes were such a great story that they should continue to use them on into 1988. If they want great quotes so much, I suggest they dig up some old

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Brian Bosworth quotations. I have a feeling this is going to be the big year for Nebraska and Coach Osborne. A national championship will be a sweet thing this year after what he's been through recently. This is the Huskers' year to talk softly and carry a big stick. Raymond Corbitt
Lincoln, Neb.

RECRUITING

Dear Huskers:

What is the latest opinion from the Cornhusker coaches on the condition of our 1988 recruiting class? Everyone seems to say it is not a good recruiting class by Nebraska standards in light of the great classes of 1985 and 1987. That's very hard to take. Ron Nemecek
Scottsbluff, Neb.

Ron: NU coaches are a bit hesitant to publicly pass judgment on freshmen this early in the season for a number of reasons. One, extreme praise can give a youngster the proverbial big head, and also there's the concern of hurting morale with severe criticism. Privately, though, Nebraska coaches say, indeed, there are several studs in this recruiting class, and they toss around such labels as "future All-American" when discussing some youngsters. Despite what the recruiting "experts" say, NU staffers feel they may soon be laughing all the way to the bowls with this sleeper class.

TOM SLIGHTED?

Dear Huskers:

A friend has tried to tell me that Tom Osborne has never won Coach of the Year honors in the Big Eight or in the nation, and I disagree because he had to have won it back in 1983 at least. It does seem like Joe Paterno wins it about every year, which I don't think is right because Penn State goes 7-4 about every other year and goes to some minor bowl. Do you know if Coach Osborne for sure has been named to one of these awards?

Also, do you know if the Black Shirts will change their pass defense this year? I hope so. Go Big Red! J.W. Burris
Hastings, Neb.

J.W.: Yes, Osborne has been named Big Eight Coach of the Year five times. He also received the same honor five times for District VII by the American Football Coaches Association. In 1983, Osborne received the national honor from *Football News*. As far as pass defense is concerned, no major overhauls are ex-

pected, although the improvement of on-campus personnel will probably bring about a change for the better.

We want to hear your comments and answer your questions. Address them to "Letters," P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, NE 68501. ■

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Return to Glory

WHISPERS ABOUND THAT NU'S OFFENSIVE LINE IS STEADILY RETURNING TO ITS THRONE OF THE EARLY '80s.



With three of the best offensive lines in history, Nebraska posted three wins over Oklahoma in 1981-1983 to the delight of Dean Steinkuhler (71).

Anonymity is synonymous with most college offensive linemen but that's not so, at least, at Nebraska.

The assistant coach in charge of the offensive wall, Milt Tenopir, and aide Dan Young have tutored a magnificent parade of Cornhusker blocking behemoths during the 1980s. There have been five All-Americans, including the fabled Dave Rimington, who won more awards in 1981 and '82 than General George S. Patton did in World War II. You can't forget the often-decorated Dean Steinkuhler, or Mark Traynowicz or Randy Schleusener or Harry Grimminger.

That's a rather fabulous fivesome, who helped rattle the Big Eight Conference and NCAA offensive record books and five times in the last six years kept the Huskers in the top six nationally, including a heart-wrenching near miss for a national championship in 1983. Although three starters return for 1988, gone are the two all-conference awardees, John McCormick and Keven Lightner.

These facts give interesting rise to the question of why, from sources close and far, there is speculation that the 1988 Nebraska offensive line may be its best of the decade.

"We've never had an offensive line since I've been at Nebraska where we've had to run either left or right to achieve maximum effectiveness," Tenopir says. "But I don't believe we've ever had as much balance in the offensive line as we have this year.

"I feel very comfortable with the five young men we have there, plus some of the swing and backup players."

The principal five are tackles Bob

Sledge and Doug Glaser, guards Andy Keeler and John Nelson and center Jake Young. Then there's versatile Jeff Anderson, who is as negotiable as bearer bonds because he can "swing" at both tackles, back up the center and does the deep-snap chores.

While weight room and quickness drills are always stressed in the Husker camp, Tenopir qualifies this by adding, "We don't always stress how fast they can run or how much they can lift, but whether they can play the game of football side-by-side in the line like we need them to play.

"Heck, the big kids who can run go to defense anyway," he adds with a chuckle.

"The amazing thing about these kids in preseason practice is the retention of what they learned last spring. We had our entire offense in the first week or 10 days, and after that it was a matter of polishing things."

If Tenopir is right, it's quite likely the Huskers are well supplied in this important area for some time to come. In fact, four of the six are juniors, and Young and the mountainous Glaser are true juniors, something that hasn't been seen often in Lincoln.

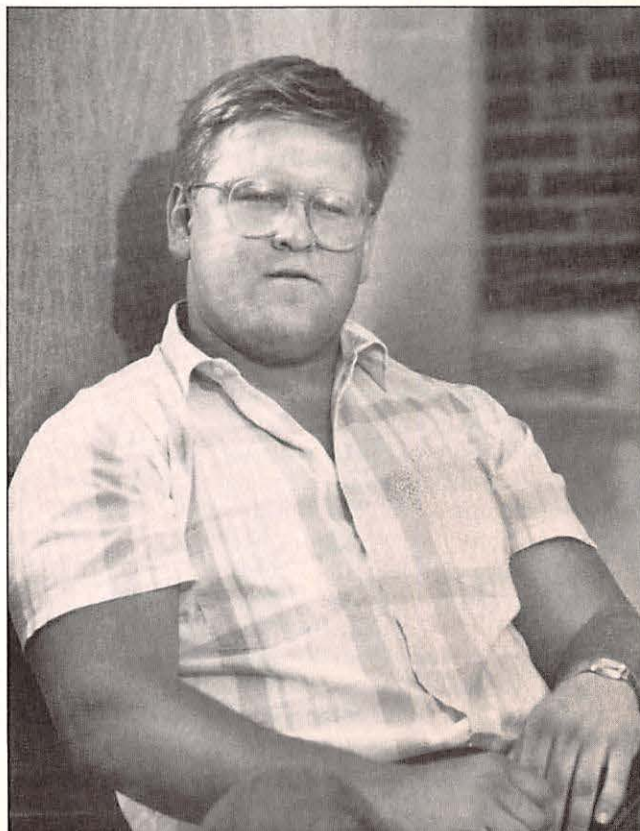
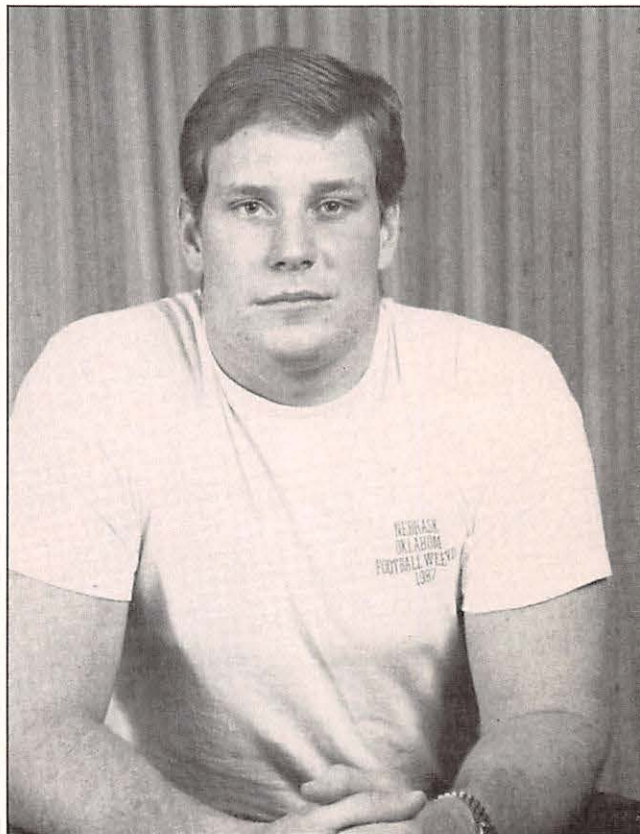
The hub of all this promise might be a pair of unlikely roommates, Sledge and Young, whose names might follow Rimington and Steinkuhler on many coveted trophies. They're both capable of being role players, articulately good students and athletes, and neither was highly recruited after high school.

In fact, Sledge spent a year at South Dakota before he "walked on" at Lincoln, worked his way through the ranks and, along with Young and Keeler, was a starter last year. He's a B-minus student in business administration and plans to "work for a small business some time down the line."

Sledge adds, "If pro ball comes, okay. I'm not going to push it.

"I feel real good about our offensive line this year. It's the most experienced group I've seen at Nebraska. We don't have any special names or stuff like that, but it's expected that Nebraska will have a good

Jake Young (top) has received preseason All-American honors this year, and Bob Sledge (bottom) is also an all-star candidate, but what makes Nebraska double tough is balance.





offensive line and I feel we'll fulfill that expectation. It's just great to be part of it now.

"Off the field, I'm probably what you'd call laid back. I don't have any trouble sleeping the night before a game but I do remember last year when I started my first game, I lost my breath for a while. That was an experience, but after the first hit or two things leveled out."

Much attention has been paid to bench press abilities and/or speed in the 40-yard dash, but this doesn't faze Sledge much. He sighs rather philosophically and says, "Oh, I guess I can bench 390 pounds and I think my time in the 40 is 5.2. But, you know, I've never had to run 40 yards to block somebody yet."

Sledge had two older brothers who played in the line at UNO and much of the trauma that goes with two-a-day practices and an early start to perform in the Kickoff Classic against Texas

Led by Dave Rimington (50) in 1981, Nebraska started a four-year reign as the leader of college football offensive lines. The Huskers could be re-elected in 1988.

A&M doesn't leave him in a nonplus state of mind.

"Two-a-days are as tough as you make 'em," Sledge claims. "If you worry about the heat, then it's probably going to affect you."

"As for the early start in practice for the Kickoff Classic, the seniors look at it this way. . . let's go out in style. Everybody on this team has been looking forward to the season."

As for his roommate, he grins and says, "We get along fine. What goes on in there stays in there. You can't take anything away from Jake. He's overcome some injuries and he's a great player."

Young, who at a gangly 6-foot-4 by 190 pounds his senior season at Midland, Tex., Lee High School, didn't draw "blue chip" recruiting attention, says about Sledge: "He's a stud. A good guy. I keep remembering he used to wrestle in high school, so I don't mess with him."

"Besides, I don't think the furniture could take it!"

There's a fond fierceness in Tenopir's voice when he talks about Young. He says, "Everything considered, he might be the best center we've ever had. When you consider some of the centers we've had, that's really saying something, but I've never worked with a kid like Jake."

"He comes across as a placid kid, but when you pull the trigger it's amazing what he gets done. He's a 100-mph practice player and the only player I've ever told to slow down in midweek because I was afraid he wouldn't have enough left on Saturday."

A topnotch student (3.4 in business finance and pre-law studies), Young considers his answers before giving them, has acute awareness of the value of his status and almost parrots Sledge when you talk about a professional football future.

As for the pros, he adds, "Pro ball is great, but only a select few make it. You've got to get ready for the rest of your life, starting now. I plan to graduate on time and then apply for law school."

"I wasn't very heavily recruited out of high school, but I did get a chance to consider Texas and TCU, too. I picked Nebraska because of its

stability, coaching staff and tradition.

"When you come here, you know you're going to win."

As for living up to comparative expectations of other Husker offensive line crews, he wisely says, "I couldn't tell you and probably wouldn't if I had an opinion. Nobody on the team talks about comparing ours with the ones of the past. We aren't trying to live up to anybody's expectations but our own."

"The four guys I'm playing with in

The hub of all of this promise might be a pair of unlikely roommates, Sledge and Young.

the line (Keeler, Sledge, Nelson and Glaser) are great players. So is Jeff (Anderson) because he can do so many things. We've had a lot of experience in playing together and that really helps."

Tenopir admits to a great reluctance in breaking up an offensive line that functioned so well last spring and has proven its ability to choreograph its moves so well. He claims, "The secret of a good offensive lineman is knowing where

to go, when to go there and how to get there.

"If you're a noseguard and go the wrong way, you still might make the tackle. If an offensive lineman goes the wrong way then an offensive back gets stuck in the mouth."

"There's no question in my mind of what they've had to do to get where they are. They set extremely high goals for themselves each game and most of the time they achieve them."

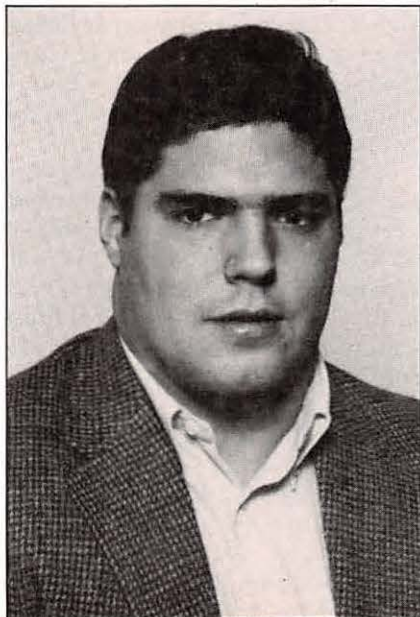
"And, there's another thing about them that's neat... they get all of this done and they aren't a bunch of rah-rah guys."

Probably the highest praise is from an opponent. Assistant head coach and defensive line coach George Walstad of Oklahoma State applauded the Husker blockers in Nebraska's 35-0 thrashing of the viable Cowboys in Stillwater last year.

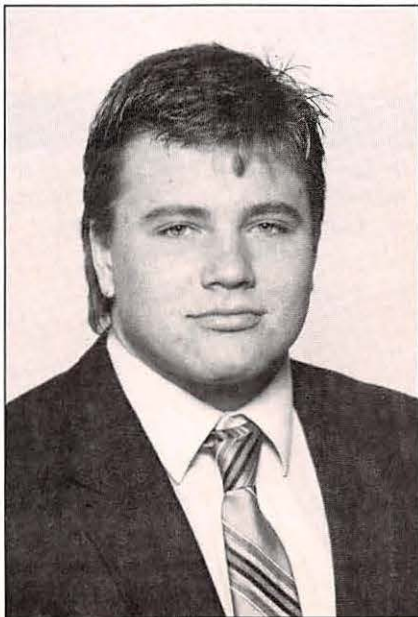
"The day we played them they were damned good," Walstad relates. "It was as good a performance as I have ever seen. That 65 (Keeler) had a heckuva day. It looked like they'd been doing that forever and that's a sign of good coaching."

"If they're better than last year, that'll be something to see."

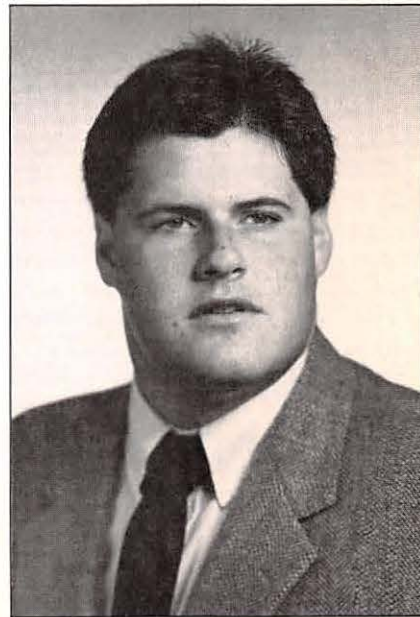
For sure, it'll be something the Husker faithful will be watching with great fascination. ■



Andy Keeler



John Nelson



Doug Glaser

Mike Babcock

In Search of a Game

OFF-SEASON PRACTICE IS CRITICAL TO A BASKETBALLER'S IN-SEASON SUCCESS. THREE HUSKERS HAD TO HUSTLE TO FIND A FOE.

If Rich King had known then what he knows now, he would have played in a summer basketball league sponsored by Omaha's Downtown YMCA.

And if Beau Reid knew then what he knows now, he would have played in a YMCA basketball league in Lincoln.

Jed Bergen played in the Lincoln league, but he got a late start because he didn't know then what he knows now.

What didn't those Nebraska basketball players know until it was too late?

Well, when King told Coach Danny Nee about his intention to play in the Downtown Omaha league, against players like former Cornhusker and European professional star Chuck Jura, he was told to wait. "Coach Nee wasn't sure the league was sanctioned," says King, who played at Omaha's Burke High.

Nee didn't want his players to jeopardize their eligibility by competing in summer leagues not sanctioned by the NCAA.

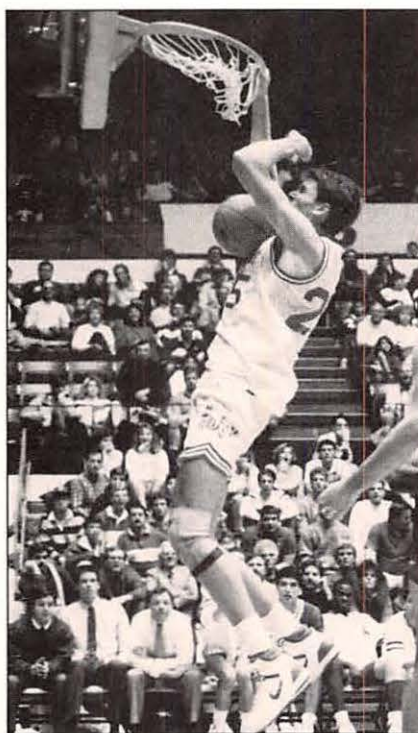
By the time he got an answer — the leagues were okay — it was too late, except for Bergen, who joined a team that included some former Lincoln East High School teammates.

Reid, who attended high school in Lancaster, Ohio, wasn't so lucky.

In order to get on a YMCA team in Lincoln, "you have to know someone," he says. "If you don't know anyone, you're out of luck. I wish they had a league I could've gotten in."

It's tough to stay sharp without an organized league in which to compete.

It's not impossible, though. Reid made the most of his summer. He



A key to Nebraska's success in 1988-89, Rich King found pick-up games hard to come by this summer.

spent two weeks on vacation with his family, a trip that included some time on the beaches in South Carolina.

But the rest of the summer he maintained a regular schedule of workouts, intended to prepare him for his sophomore season at Nebraska.

"I didn't do much running, going out and jogging. I've never liked that," Reid says. "I rode the stationary bike to stay in shape and then I did my individual workout."

The workout was patterned after one he learned while he was in high school, attending a summer basketball camp conducted by Nee, then head coach at Ohio University. Reid began with ball handling, then "I'd shoot in close to the basket until I got loose. Then I'd work on the shots I use in a game and make moves with the ball."

Nee instructed him to work on his shooting from 3-point range, something on which he also concentrated during Nebraska's eight-game tour of Australia and New Zealand in the spring.

Nee wants his team to concentrate more on 3-point shooting this season.

Reid was the Cornhuskers' most effective 3-point shooter last season, hitting 26 of 67, 38.8 percent. Obviously, he has good range. But "I think I was stretching it a little bit last season," Reid says.

He certainly wasn't as comfortable shooting from the outside as he is now. "If it's open, I'm going to take it," says Reid, a 6-foot-7 forward.

He's made it his shot.

That was accomplished in a methodical way. Each workout, Reid would shoot around the horn from 3-point range, 50 shots from each

corner, 50 shots from the top of the key. "If I was making them, I didn't shoot as many (from a given spot) sometimes," he says.

His goal was to take 3-point shots without thinking about it. To achieve that goal, he strengthened his legs.

Strong legs make a difference to an outside shooter. "I realized that more than anything this summer," says Reid.

The hard work and dedication have paid off. The 3-point shots "come off more smoothly now," Reid says.

King, a 7-2 sophomore center, didn't really need to work on his 3-point shot this summer. But "I still shot them once in a while," he says.

King divided his summer between his home in Omaha and Lincoln, where his grandmother lives. In June, during Nebraska's basketball camps, King and several other Cornhuskers played at the Devaney Sports Center "about every night, Sunday through Thursday," King says, adding, the problems began when the camps were over.

Without a league in which to play, he had to find his own competition. The best places in Lincoln were Nebraska Wesleyan University, where the gym was open Tuesday and Thursday nights, and Irving Junior High School, where he played with and against former Cornhuskers Derrick Vick and Henry Buchanan, his ex-teammates, as well as Anthony Bailous and Jerry Shoecraft.

The pick-up games at Wesleyan included many of the Plainsmen, as well as some Kearney State College players and Lincolnite Alex Stivrins, who played collegiately at Creighton and Colorado and professionally in Europe.

Playing against the 6-7 Stivrins, a good rebounder, was particularly helpful, says King, who had difficulty finding people his height to play.

While one of Reid's main goals was becoming more proficient from 3-point range, King's concern "was building up strength," he says. "When we got back from Australia, I set that as a goal."

King played well during the Australia-New Zealand trip, averaging 20.3 points and 8.4 rebounds per

game. He scored in double figures in all eight games, with highs of 26 points twice, and 12 rebounds. He shot 65 percent from the field, second-best on the team.

The Australia-New Zealand trip was as discouraging for Bargaen as it was promising for King. In the second half of the first game on the tour, Bargaen suffered a severe ankle sprain.

As a result, "I had my foot in ice most of the time," he says.

He was unable to play until the final game, and even then, he was hardly able to go full-speed on the ankle.

The trip to Australia "was going to be my chance to get experience," says Bargaen, who's trying to make the transition from front-court player to back-court player. He's 6-5.

Bargaen did a lot of therapy to strengthen his ankle during the summer, including "jumping a lot of rope." To help avoid a recurrence of the injury, he now wears a heavy-duty brace.

His YMCA team competed in a Wednesday night league. Because of the question regarding NCAA sanctioning, he played "in only nine or 10 games."

Bargaen focused most of his basketball attention on individual workouts, lifting and conditioning and improving both his 3-point shooting and his ball handling and dribbling skills.

The best situations for working on the latter two were pick-up games, in which "I'd try to take the ball and go myself," says Bargaen, whose father is Nebraska assistant Gary Bargaen.

Jed Bargaen, an excellent student, took the summer off from his studies to prepare for this basketball season. He and his family planned a short vacation trip to Kansas City, Mo., before classes at the University resumed.

"That's enough (vacation) for me," Bargaen says. "I'm looking forward to this season." He's even ready for the start of preseason conditioning.

King took a speech class during the University's first summer session, then worked for a trucking company in Wahoo, Neb. primarily doing maintenance work. To get away, he made two short trips to Minnesota. "It was a pretty good summer," says King,



Beau Reid used his summer break to improve both the quantity and quality of his 3-pointers.

who like Bargaen is excited about Nebraska's basketball prospects for this season.

Reid took two summer school classes to get some requirements out of the way, and worked in the accounting department at Seward Motor Freight in Seward, Neb.

That meant a 50-minute, round-trip drive each day. But the experience was well worth the drive, says Reid, a business major. His primary duty required working on a computer.

All things considered, it was a productive summer for Reid. The only hitch was not being able to play in an organized league. "While I was in high school, I played in three," he says.

If he had only known. ■

Mark Owens

Knock, Knock!

JACKIE SHERRILL SOUGHT HIGH-RENT STATUS,
BUT THE BIG RED BLOCKED THE DOOR.

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Nothing personal, that's just the way it is. As Nebraska dug its nails deep into a six-point lead midway in the final period of the Kickoff Classic, Texas A&M yell leader Waylan Cain of Houston — dressed in cadet garb and stony serious — silently backed away from a Husker cheerleader who offered a handshake. The NU yellers took time from cheering No. 2 Nebraska against No. 10 A&M to routinely offer their services to the foe.

But Waylan, like all good cadets, kept his eyes straight ahead, his heart focused on the battle, and said nothing. Moments later the NU squad tried to lead a generic cheer in front of the 300-strong A&M band, which neither blinked nor twitched. More silence. Texas A&M football is serious business.

Nebraska was on its way to a 23-14 win in the sixth annual Classic, which proved Tom Osborne's Huskers may be even better than they used to say they were, and that the Aggie linebackers are as spectacular as advertised even though they may not have been the best on the field at Giants Stadium. The result was 55 minutes of classic football.

This game turned on the linebackers.

Stud-and-proud-of-it John Roper joined fellow Aggie outside linebacker Aaron Wallace to pulverize NU quarterback Steve Taylor at 8:55 of the third quarter. The self-proclaimed Blitz Brothers stopped a promising Nebraska drive by pressuring Taylor into an incompletion and then making the Nebraska star's ribcage the intersection of their figure-eight destruction derby. Taylor wobbled off the field, lucky to have the breath, instead of the daylight, knocked out of

him. Had he not returned, no one would have been surprised.

Even though Gregg Barrios consequently kicked a 38-yard field goal to close NU to within 7-6, defending Cotton Bowl champ Texas A&M still had the lead and momentum. The arrival of talented but inexperienced backup QB Gerry Gdowski seemed imminent. Instead, Taylor returned on his team's next possession to spark the Nebraska offense. All-American Roper and all-out Wallace were soon neutralized. Their counterparts for Nebraska, Broderick Thomas and Leroy Etienne, then took charge to take

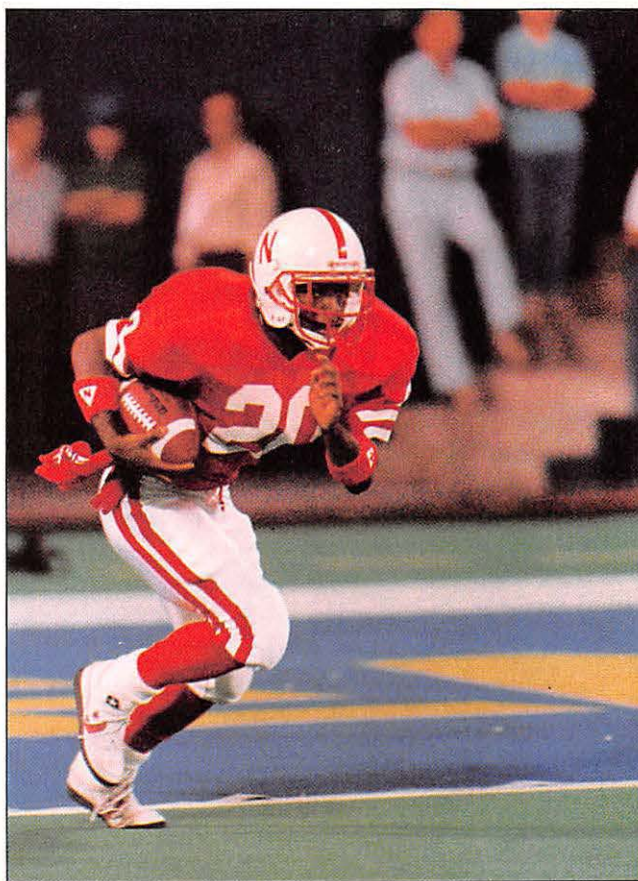
the fight out of A&M. Barely.

With just a little background info, it's easy to see why Tom Osborne's Huskers knew they were in for a blood shedding.

A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill said before the game, "Why are we here? We came to present our program to the nation." He and his assistant coaches had pointed for some time to the 1988-89 seasons as arrival time of Aggie football into Big Time football. Nebraska represented Big Time football, and a win over the Huskers would mark A&M's irrefutable arrival.

College Station burned with Big

**I-back Terry
Rodgers gets
off to a fast
start in 1988 by
rushing for 65
yards.**



Time fever. As usual, thousands attended a midweek, midnight yell practice on campus. More than 1,000 A&M boosters boosted at a midnight yell practice in Manhattan the night before the game. Thousands more attended tent and tailgate parties at the stadium. All in all, Sherrill had in five

years restored Aggie fervor with Ayatollah-like control, intensity and conviction.

What's more, he had the talent. Sherrill said this was his best-conditioned squad ever. His linebackers had been rated the best in America by *The Sporting News*. Quarterback

Bucky Richardson had been named Offensive MVP of last year's Cotton Bowl win over Notre Dame. A&M's defense looked to be one of the nation's toughest.

All this contrasted with Nebraska. Lincoln campus activities were nil. No bon fires. No pep rallies. Students barely arrived a day before the Huskers left town. Thomas, uncharacteristically reserved, said he was going to New York just to shop and play football. Cornhuskers everywhere were laid-back. "Yeah, in a way I guess I'm excited," said *Daily Nebraskan* senior sports writer Mark Derowitsch, providing pre-game analysis between yawns. "I just don't think it's going to be closer than 20 points."

Just another Big Time game for the Big Red, right?

Hardly. Nebraska sent a Big Time message with its impressive second-half performance, which the Huskers probably hoped Oklahoma noticed. Quotes out of the Sooner camp a day before the game alleged Nebraska was a fourth-quarter choker in big games.

Against A&M, NU played its best after intermission. On this hazy but otherwise pleasant, full-moon evening, Nebraska became monstrously effective after being hideously sloppy in the first half. Trailing 7-3 at the break, Osborne's squad kicked — in more ways than one — to open the third period. Speedy All-Southwest Conference receiver Rod Harris took the ball to his 20 where Mr. Eight-Nine-Ten (47 in your program) put A&M's best long-ball threat out for the count. Unblocked, Etienne hit Harris one-on-one, sending his feet in the air and his shoulder out of location. Harris wouldn't return, which hurt one quarter later when the Cornhuskers allegedly were to gag, but didn't.

Here was Etienne, supposedly just Nebraska's No. 2 stud linebacker behind Thomas, plastering an Aggie star by himself while eight minutes later, Texas A&M's two best LBs couldn't take out Taylor with a combo effort. That was an ominous sign.

What followed was impressive. After the teams traded penalties on that first possession of the third quarter,



Charles Fryar (10) intercepts A&M while Tim Jackson (4) waits his turn.

SCORING SUMMARY

Nebraska 23, Texas A&M 14

| | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|----|------|
| Texas A&M..... | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 | — 14 |
| Nebraska..... | 0 | 3 | 9 | 11 | — 23 |

A&M — Gurley 1 run (Slater kick).

Neb — FG, Barrios 44.

Neb — FG, Barrios 38.

Neb — Clark 1 run (pass failed).

Neb — Millikan 20 pass from Taylor (Clark run).

A&M — Simmons 2 run (Slater kick).

Neb — FG, Barrios 48.

Attendance: 58,172.

Richardson optioned left where Eight-Nine-Ten and Seventy-Four (noseguard Mike Murray) made a no-gain-more-pain hit. The senior linebacker had leap-frogged a block from all-league Aggie right guard Jerry Fontenot and brushed aside a push from flanker Gary Oliver. Murray was pit-bulled onto Richardson's ankles, having chased him across the field.

Next, Thomas came to life after a figuratively silent first half. A&M chose to run right at Nebraska's Mad Shopper, but Thomas flicked aside tight end Wally Hartley like something gooey on his finger, then he wrapped up highly touted tailback Larry Horton for no gain.

On third down, A&M couldn't convert and punted. That's when Nebraska's offense showed signs of life. Taylor converted one third-down situation with a 7-yard scamper, moving the chains with a yard to spare. Then he hit deluxe and clutch split end Morgan Gergory (who would get four passes for 44 yards) for 7 yards and another third-down conversion, into Aggie territory. Next, freshman split end Nate Turner, also deluxe and also clutch, pulled in a 16-yarder, half-running and half-crawling to the A&M 25. From there senior fullback Sam Schmidt lumbered 11 yards in the finest tradition of Ken Kaelin and Micah Heibel.

Finally, however, Roper and Wallace crushed Taylor as mentioned earlier after haunting the new school record holder the entire drive. On that march, Taylor's 7-yard scamper pushed him past Turner Gill as the career rushing leader among NU quarterbacks.

Still, it was a sign of things to come. Safety Tim Jackson intercepted Richardson on A&M's very next play to set up NU's first TD drive, and lead, of the night. Of note, linebacker Pat Tyrance threw a slicing block to spring the almost-down Jackson on a 15-yard return to the Aggie 25. From there, I-back Ken Clark rambled for 9 thanks to guard John Nelson, who pulled from the right side to de-blitz the impressive Wallace.

Moments later from the Aggie 12, Clark burst on a draw for 7 with

Jon Marco (93) proves that Steve Taylor wasn't the only quarterback who got pounded in the Kickoff Classic.



Schmidt and Nelson throwing key blocks. It took several more jabs up the gut to do it, but Nebraska finally scored on Clark's 1-yard run up the middle behind the wall of fame. Bob Sledge and Andy Keeler bodily shoved A&M's noseguard out of New Jersey and into Queens, Nelson and Doug Glaser raced into the inside linebacker zone to wipe out those guys and third-team center Roger Frizke (who was filling in for Jeff Anderson, who was filling in for Jake Young) tripped up blitzing linebacker stud Adam Bob.

That left only Schmidt to face-smash with Dana Batiste, which he did, and Clark scored on a draw. It looked so easy.

Nebraska led, 12-7, with 4:32 left in the third period, and momentum had clearly swung Big Time.

From there in, Thomas chased Richardson out of the pocket unmercifully. Thomas' maniacal summer and preseason conditioning paid dividends as Richardson rarely had time

to set up, and Etienne's maniacal hit had already eliminated A&M's best deep threat, Harris. That hurt.

Unable to drive, the Aggies punted and Nebraska marched 80 yards to score on a 20-yard pass from Taylor to tight end Todd Millikan. Osborne's offense had scored on each of its first three possessions in the second half.

Texas A&M would get a late touchdown, but not before the Big Red had scored 20 second-half points. Hardly the stuff of chokers.

If anything, it was the stuff of a deep, poised, somewhat young football team. The New York media noted often that Osborne would field 10 first-time starters. It was 12 actually and here's what they did. Nelson, Glaser, Schmidt and Clark were impressive more often than not, especially in the second half. On defense, Tyrance and Jackson were everywhere. Tackles Ray Valladao and Paul Brungardt were steady, Reggie Cooper was down-right dangerous and may already be the best strong safety in

Photo by Bill Kastroun

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PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Security Mutual Life has been sharing the winning tradition of Nebraska for 93 years and you can count on us to continue that tradition.

Taylor Reheats NU Offense

Steve Taylor showed poise.

Getting pounded all night from both sides by Texas A&M's blitzing linebackers, the San Diego senior calmly led Nebraska's second-half offensive rally, hardly spectacular, but effective.

Taylor rushed for 34 yards on 18 carries, three of which were third-down conversions and generally showed fine athletic skill. Midway in the third period, for example, A&M's John Roper all but had Taylor in his grasp when the Husker signal caller

twisted away, sprinted to the sideline and lofted a delicate pass to Richard Bell after a sack appeared inevitable.

Taylor threw 22 passes and completed 11 for 125 yards, but could easily have had 14 if three hadn't gone in and out of receivers' hands. Still, the 11 completions tied a career high.

His touchdown pass to tight end Todd Millikan pushed Taylor's career TD total to 20, good for No. 5 on Nebraska's school charts. It snapped a four-game stretch in which Taylor had not thrown a scoring strike. Previously, the three-year starter had hit TD passes in six straight games during the early stages of the 1987 season.

On a day when Nebraska's I-back combo, Ken Clark and Terry Rodgers, was effective, though not dominating, Taylor was NU's workhorse behind Clark. Clark rushed for 80 yards on 20 carries while Taylor had only two fewer totes. Missing were Taylor's outside sprints, which A&M effectively contained with its relentless blitzing. His longest run was 18 yards as he scrambled out of the pocket.

Taylor's poise was rarely shaken. Oh sure, he made a couple of bizarre pitchouts, but his mistakes were minor. When Nebraska looked like it might fold early offensively against the Aggie defense, Taylor led an almost error-free attack in the second half and directed the offense inside, away from A&M's deadly outside linebackers. ■



Steve Taylor enjoyed his third highly successful season opener.

the Big Eight, and linebacker Jeff Mills showed good quickness.

That's only 11, you say? Right. The final first-time starter was place-kicking Barrios, who missed his first field goal then aced the next three. He provided the winning margin.

What this 55-minute classic also provided was great exposure for Nebraska, too. Even though A&M wanted the national exposure to reach the Big Time, Nebraska partly wanted the regional exposure to reach the even Bigger Time. You see, New Jersey high schools produced almost as much Big Time talent last spring as Texas and California, with the Huskers adding two Jersey studs (Ernie Beler and Scott Baldwin) to their East Coast collections.

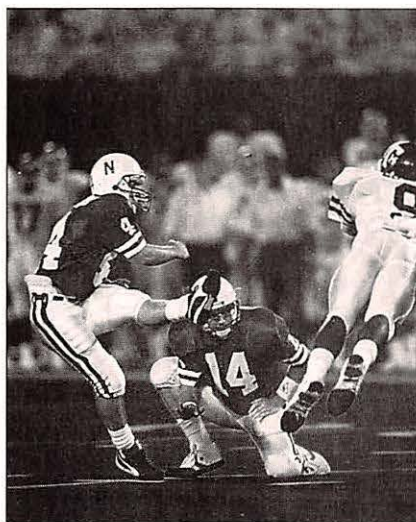
Within driving distance of Giants Stadium, preseason high school All-Americans like Alonzo Spellman and Rob Brown can be found in volumes.

Jersey! Mike Rozier was from Jersey. So was Irving Fryar, Charles Fryar (who intercepted Richardson this night), Doug Dubose, Jeff Mills, and on and on.

Still, the Big Apple media asked often, "Just why is it the Huskers played this game with so much to lose?" The answer — there was so much to win, too.

The game was full of outstanding individual performances.

A&M scored first on a 1-yard run



Gregg Barrios boots one of his three field goals, which provided the winning margin.

by fullback Matt Gurley, who should have kissed Darren Lewis after the touchdown because D-D-Darren stutter-stepped for 16 yards and j-j-jittered for an impossible 4 more. Harris deserved a smooch, too. Nebraska was pinned inside it's 10, and John Kroeker punted nicely to the A&M 49, but Harris juke expert-

ly for 15 yards to give A&M good field position.

Both Lewis and Horton will someday be stars. A&M punter Sean Wilson was phenomenal. Only a poor day by Richardson kept the Aggies from challenging till the end.

The battle between A&M's celebrated linebackers and Nebraska's crew was mostly a matter of pride ("I hope Texas A&M's linebackers aren't a whole lot better than ours," Osborne said before the game, "because those guys are pretty much the best athletes on our team."), and both sets of linebackers had much to be proud of.

Taylor, Thomas and Etienne launched convincing campaigns, at least when it comes to getting elected to All-American teams. Roper did the same. Thomas had 11 tackles, Etienne made 10, while Taylor hit 11 of 22 passes (three were dropped) for 125 yards and one TD. He also ran for 34 yards, but A&M took its pound-of-flesh revenge on each of Taylor's 18 carries. He wasn't intercepted.

But those are only stats. Nebraska's football team had a lot on the line this night, and came out a winner. It didn't matter that a cadet wouldn't shake hands or that an understandably distraught Roper wouldn't give interviews after the game. Nobody wants to lose a football game.

It was all a very serious affair. ■

Photo by Bill Kastroun

| SEASON RECAP | 8/27 A&M | 9/3 UTAH | 9/10 UCLA | 9/24 ASU | 10/1 UNLV | 10/8 KU | 10/15 OSU | 10/22 KSU | 10/29 MU | 11/5 ISU | 11/12 CU | 11/19 OU | BOWL | SEASON AVERAGE |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------|-------------------|
| First Downs | 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 11 |
| Yards Rushing | 235 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 235 |
| Yards Passing | 125 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 125 |
| Fumbles - Lost | 5-3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 5-3 |
| Time of Possession | 36:05 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 36:05 |
| Third Down Conversions | 18-9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 18-9 |
| Final Score | 23-14 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 23-14 |

Pro scouts keep a tight lip about college players until their senior season gets well under way, but the early word on free safety Tim Jackson is that the rapidly improving junior college transfer is projected as a possible middle-round draft pick by the National Football League. Of course, scouts say that depends on continued improvement and good health.

He showed that potential with a leaping interception against Texas A&M and a nifty 15-yard runback.

Preseason prep All-American Junior Bryant (6-5, 265) of Omaha Creighton Prep is a lineman of considerable reputation, probably the top high school prospect in Nebraska this fall, according to recruiting gurus. Comparisons are out that he could be better than *Parade* All-American Dave

Jensen, who signed with NU last spring.

Danny Noonan's "little" brother David (6-4, 245) out of Lincoln Northeast is another standout prospect in the Cornhusker state prep ranks. Like Danny, he's an avid weight lifter and already much bigger than his celebrated brother was at the same age. He'll likely be an offensive lineman, though.

Said A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill: "The difference in the game came in the third quarter. Big plays won the game for Nebraska, and they made those big plays in the third quarter. In the first half, we had the momentum and had the game under control. If we hit the field goal, we lead, 10-0, and look pretty good."

At the Kickoff Classic, A&M star John Roper arrived with his teammates at 4:30 a.m. Thursday morning wearing sunglasses and said he wouldn't take them off till after the game. He didn't.

Broderick Thomas' main objective besides football was to go shopping in Manhattan, specifically for a Mike Tyson leather jacket that carries the message "Ignore the Hype."

LeRoy Etienne was a big hit among New York reporters and photographers because of the gold tights he wore during early workouts. After the game, he was a big hit among national wire service personnel because of his big hits on the Aggies.

One of Etienne's victims, split end Rod Harris, had been called by A&M coaches "one of the most dangerous return men in the country." His nickname is "Moses," given to him because he said as a high school recruit that he would take A&M to the "promised land."

Jake Young was one of 81 Huskers who made the trip to New Jersey, but lounged casually on the sidelines during the game. He was suited up in pads, but looked at ease wearing a baseball cap. However, when backup center Jeff Anderson got hurt on Nebraska's touchdown drive near the Aggie goal in the third quarter, Young lost the cap in a hurry and was shadowing Tom Osborne. His helmet was on.

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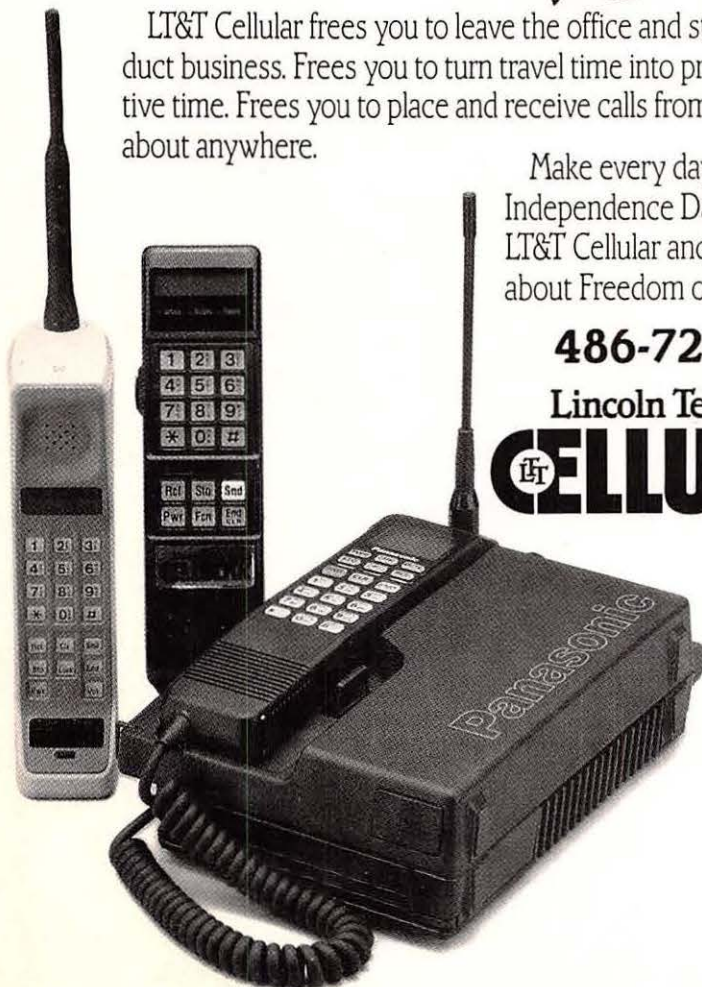
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What a difference two years make. In 1986 Terry Rodgers was in and out of ball games at critical times because Coach Osborne was concerned about his fumbling. When the A&M game was on the line, Rodgers was there. He finished with 65 yards on just 10 carries and showed catlike quickness.

"I really worked hard on building up my strength this summer and it paid off," said Rodgers. "I *had* to build up my strength because I couldn't do anything about my height. I'd like to think I proved I can take a hit."

It may seem hard to believe, but Nebraska has now gone four games without scoring 30 points. Dating back to last season, the Huskers lost to Oklahoma, 17-7, beat Colorado, 24-7, lost to Florida State, 31-28, and now own a 23-14 win over Texas A&M. No Tom Osborne-coached team has ever gone four games without scoring over 30 points at least once. The key, however, is that those four opponents were a combined 39-8 last year. Colorado was the only team among the four that wasn't in the Top 10 polls or a New Year's Day bowl last year.

Kickoff Classic officials were tickled with their Husker-Aggie matchup, saying it was the most attractive game they have had since Auburn and Miami in their second contest.

Here's what some of the preseason prognosticators say about Big Red football, often with tongue in cheek, occasionally with foot in mouth:

MOST ENCOURAGING PICK

"The Cornhuskers will knock off archrival Oklahoma and reappear in the Orange Bowl," says *The Sporting News*, which ranks NU No. 4, OU No. 6.

TWISTED LOGIC PICK

"The Cornhuskers are riding a fine line of staying in the Top 20," says *Football Action*, which adds, "a weak schedule and their powerful reputation earn them this spot," a generous No. 14 honor. The deep thinkers at *EA* write a few pages later that NU will not reach the top spot because of "a tough schedule."

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER PICK

Graduated senior offensive tackle Keven Lightner is selected by *Lindy's*

to its 1988 preseason All-Big Eight team.

BIG EIGHT BASHING PICK

Sport climbs out on the limb of a sappling by picking Iowa as its preseason choice to win the national championship, saying the No. 1 reason the Hawkeyes will finish No. 1 is their "easy" non-conference schedule, which includes Colorado, Iowa State and Kansas State.

GOOD NEWS-BAD NEWS PICK

Sport names true junior Jake Young as its preseason All-American center, but mentions Young's name only once and spends more time telling why Broderick Thomas wasn't honored.

WRONG STAR PICK

Although not included in this year's composite rankings, the *Tulsa World* picks Oklahoma lower than anybody (the Sooners were No. 10), while Nebraska is No. 13, and the Oklahoma newspaper continues its curious picks by listing on its All-American checklist a Husker linebacker by the name of Broderick Crawford.

BATTING .500 PICK

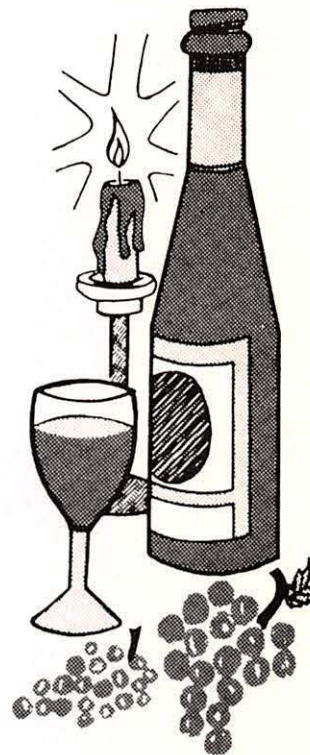
Inside Sports has the poor taste to predict Nebraska (its No. 10 pick) will lose to Oklahoma a fifth straight time, but partially redeems itself by stating in another section, "Nebraska has been the most successful college football team over the past decade."

The 1988 Nebraska Football Network has added two new radio stations as the season gets going. You can hear Big Red football now on KUVR-1380 in Holdrege and KZMC-105.3 in McCook.

Nebraska is rated No. 2 in another sport besides football. The wrestling team of Coach Tim Neumann was voted by the *Amateur Wrestling News* as having the second-best recruiting class in America. The only squad rated above NU was defending national champion Arizona State. Two of the new Huskers, Corey Olson of Hayfield, Minn., and Randy Street of Butte, Mont., were listed among the nation's Top 20 high school prospects.

On the Cover: Husker quarterback Steve Taylor was voted Outstanding Player in the Kickoff Classic, where he was captured on film by free-lance photographer Bill Kostroun. ■

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"T" as in iced tea.

"N" as in pen.

A-T-N. Say it faster. . . ATN. . . that's it. . . Etienne.

LeRoy Etienne. The Raycom television broadcasters did a pretty decent job of pronouncing the name of Nebraska's senior inside linebacker, who has for three years had his name butchered any number of ways.

Et-yen. . . Ay-teen. . . Ee-tine.

Against Texas A&M and its highly touted linebacking

corps, this New Iberia, La., native played well enough to have his name mentioned plenty, and by the end of the game, his Cajun surname was being called out more often than All-American John Roper's.

"All of our linebackers, and really the entire team played well," Etienne says in agreement to the roll call of Huskers success stories: Thomas, Jackson, Fryar, Cooper, Tyrance, Rodgers, Clark, Taylor, Gregory, Nelson, Barrios, Anderson, Turner, Milikan, and on and on.

"This year's team has such a great attitude," says Etienne. "So many guys worked their tails off this summer. And now we've come back with a very unselfish approach. It's just a joy.

"Take our younger linebackers, for example. They're definitely very talented. After I'm gone, there will be some super players coming up, and right now I just try to enjoy this situ-



LeRoy Etienne (47) and Broderick Thomas say farewell to the Big Apple.

ation of being able to play football and share with them. You know, we all get the jitters. I just try to help them relax and believe in themselves. Some people call that leadership, and I don't mind accepting that responsibility."

One thing Etienne just can't accept is being blocked.

That was clearly seen on one play at the start of the third period on A&M's first possession. All-Southwest Conference guard Jerry Fontenot tried to shoot out Etienne's legs and a flanker tried to push him over. Neither succeeded and Etienne joined with noseguard Mike Murray

in racking up a no-gain tackle.

"I just don't think I can allow that to happen," Etienne says of being blocked. "I'm going to be doing the hitting. I like to make contact and hit the blockers, and then hit them again, so that they begin to wonder if maybe they should change their blocking attack.

"I don't want them to enjoy blocking me. But a lot of the credit on plays like that will go to the defensive linemen who are keeping the offensive linemen off balance. Bro-

derick or I or any of the other linebackers can't do it by ourselves. We have a very controlled, disciplined defense at Nebraska, and I think you saw how effective we can be when we work together."

That teamwork produced monumental results. A&M's linebackers had been rated by some as the best in America, but Nebraska staked its claim as a contender, too.

"You can't take anything away from their linebackers because they really are outstanding," says Etienne. "They played a great game. It's just that they came up against a great offense. After a while, I think we began to wear them down physically.

"I enjoyed visiting with Dana Batiste and Adam Bob and Aaron Wallace before and after the game. They are good football players, and I enjoyed their company. I also enjoyed beating them tremendously." ■



INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

TEXAS A&M

| Rushing | Att. | Gain | Lost | Net | TD | Long |
|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Gurley | 5 | 16 | 0 | 16 | 1 | 7 |
| Lewis | 10 | 45 | 4 | 41 | 0 | 15 |
| Richardson | 11 | 48 | 7 | 41 | 0 | 18 |
| Horton | 9 | 82 | 1 | 81 | 0 | 26 |
| Simmons | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| McAfee | 1 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Totals | 37 | 197 | 12 | 185 | 2 | 26 |

| Passing | Att. | Cmp. | Int. | Yds. | TD | Long |
|------------|------|------|------|------|----|------|
| Richardson | 17 | 5 | 2 | 42 | 0 | 18 |

| Receiving | No. | Yds. | TD | Long |
|---------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Ross | 1 | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| Harris | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Hartley | 1 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Jones | 1 | 18 | 0 | 18 |
| Horton | 1 | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| Totals | 5 | 42 | 0 | 18 |

NEBRASKA

| Rushing | Att. | Gain | Lost | Net | TD | Long |
|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Clark | 20 | 87 | 7 | 80 | 1 | 25 |
| Taylor | 18 | 55 | 21 | 34 | 0 | 18 |
| Schmidt | 6 | 22 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 11 |
| Carpenter | 3 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Rodgers | 10 | 66 | 1 | 65 | 0 | 28 |
| Bell | 1 | 0 | 5 | -5 | 0 | - |
| Totals | 58 | 234 | 34 | 200 | 1 | 27 |

| Passing | Att. | Cmp. | Int. | Yds. | TD | Long |
|---------|------|------|------|------|----|------|
| Taylor | 22 | 11 | 0 | 125 | 1 | 20 |

| Receiving | No. | Yds. | TD | Long |
|---------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Turner | 2 | 23 | 0 | 16 |
| Millikan | 2 | 33 | 1 | 20 |
| Gregory | 4 | 44 | 0 | 13 |
| Brinson | 1 | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| Kratzenstein | 1 | 8 | 1 | 8 |
| Bell | 1 | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| Totals | 11 | 125 | 1 | 20 |

TEAM STATISTICS

Aggie Husker

| | | |
|------------------------|------|------|
| First Downs..... | 11 | 19 |
| Rushing..... | 7 | 10 |
| Passing..... | 3 | 7 |
| Penalty..... | 1 | 2 |
| Rushing Attempts..... | 37 | 59 |
| Yards Rushing..... | 197 | 235 |
| Yards Lost Rushing.... | 12 | 34 |
| Net Yards Rushing..... | 185 | 201 |
| Net Yards Passing..... | 42 | 125 |
| Passed Att..... | 17 | 22 |
| Passed Comp..... | 5 | 11 |
| INT..... | 2 | 0 |
| Total Plays..... | 54 | 81 |
| Net Yards..... | 227 | 326 |
| Gain Per Play..... | 4.2 | 40 |
| Fumbles..... | 2-1 | 5-3 |
| Penalties..... | 7-76 | 4-45 |
| Interceptions..... | 0-0 | 2-28 |
| Punts..... | 7 | 4 |
| Punt Average..... | 43.6 | 42.0 |
| Punt Returns..... | 4 | 6 |
| Punt Return Yards..... | 23 | 24 |
| Kickoff Returns..... | 6 | 3 |
| Kickoff Return Yds.... | 85 | 71 |
| Possession Time..... | 40% | 60% |

Mike Babcock

Some Traditions Live On

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Tradition. Nebraska and Texas A&M both have it.

But the Aggies' football tradition doesn't quite match Nebraska's, according to coach Jackie Sherrill.

At least, that was Sherrill's theme each time he addressed the media prior to the sixth annual Kickoff Classic.

"Nebraska's established. They didn't have to play this game," he said.

From Sherrill's point of view, the Cornhuskers had everything to lose and little to gain by winning the game.

Nebraska doesn't need the national exposure that playing in the Kickoff Classic offers, said Sherrill.

The Cornhuskers are used to such attention. But Texas A&M isn't.

He and his players were proud to be playing such a tradition-rich

program.

Nebraska didn't turn complacent in the face of Sherrill's compliments.

Rather, it proved him right.

The Cornhuskers really were too much for A&M, just as Sherrill had implied. The Aggies couldn't overcome tradition. When the fog lifted over the New Jersey Meadowlands, Nebraska had a 23-14 victory and was one step up on the rest of the field in the race for the 1988 national championship.

And Texas A&M had its sixth loss in seven openers since Sherrill became the head man in College Station.

"It's not how you start. It's how you finish. The national championship isn't given until the end of the year," Sherrill said in advance of the game. "This game isn't going to win it or lose

it. But it can help."

Osborne agreed, to a degree.

But when you're pursuing the national title, which has somehow eluded him in 15 extremely successful seasons, "it doesn't help to lose it (the opener)," said Osborne. "A team could rebound. But that's the big risk in playing a game like the Kickoff Classic."

Losing "kind of puts you behind the eight ball," Osborne said.

A lesser program than Nebraska's would have been behind the eight ball before Kickoff Classic VI (yes, the game now uses Roman numerals) began.

Four days before the game, Jake Young, the Cornhuskers' starting center, suffered strained ligaments in a knee, during a drill in practice.

The injury occurred when middle guard Lawrence Pete fell into Young. Ironically, Pete was practicing for the first time in preseason camp, after an extended bout with mononucleosis.

Young's injury was such that he probably wouldn't have made the trip to the Kickoff Classic if there had been a limit on the number of players the Cornhuskers took to New Jersey.

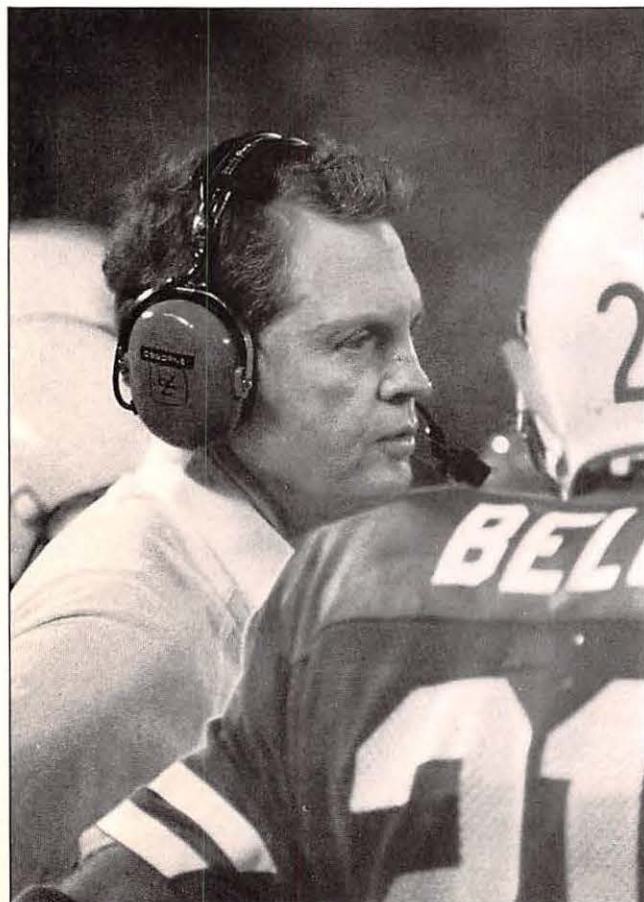
The junior from Midland, Tex., was replaced in the lineup by Jeff Anderson, a senior from Norfolk, who walked on and earned a scholarship.

Tradition? There's one at Nebraska.

Though he had never started as a Cornhusker, Anderson has been regarded as a starter the last two seasons. And he suddenly found himself with an opportunity to prove he could be one.

Anderson missed only two snaps against the Aggies. He had to be helped off the field because of a cramp.

When Anderson went out, Roger Fitzke went in. You may not be familiar with that name. Fitzke is also a walkon, a junior from Harvard, Neb., who has yet to earn a varsity letter. On the second of Fitzke's two snaps, I-back Ken Clark scored a



Under Tom Osborne, Nebraska's tradition has been built on tireless work.

touchdown from 1 yard out, going into the end zone behind a block by tackle Bob Sledge, with an assist from the 6-foot-0, 225-pound Fitzke.

Sledge also walked on at Nebraska, transferring from South Dakota in 1985 and earning second-team All-Big Eight recognition last season.

With Anderson, Sledge and guard John Nelson from Minden, Neb., Nebraska's starting offensive line for the Kickoff Classic included three walkons. And they played almost without break, against a blitzing A&M defense that included a linebacking corps rated the nation's best by *The Sporting News*.

Nebraska's walk-on tradition also proved a factor in the all-important kicking game. It was decisive, in fact. With junior Chris Drennan hampered by a sore quadriceps, redshirted sophomore Gregg Barrios found himself in the position he'd always dreamed of.

And Barrios responded in a way he'd always hoped he would, kicking three field goals to earn some media support as the player of the game.

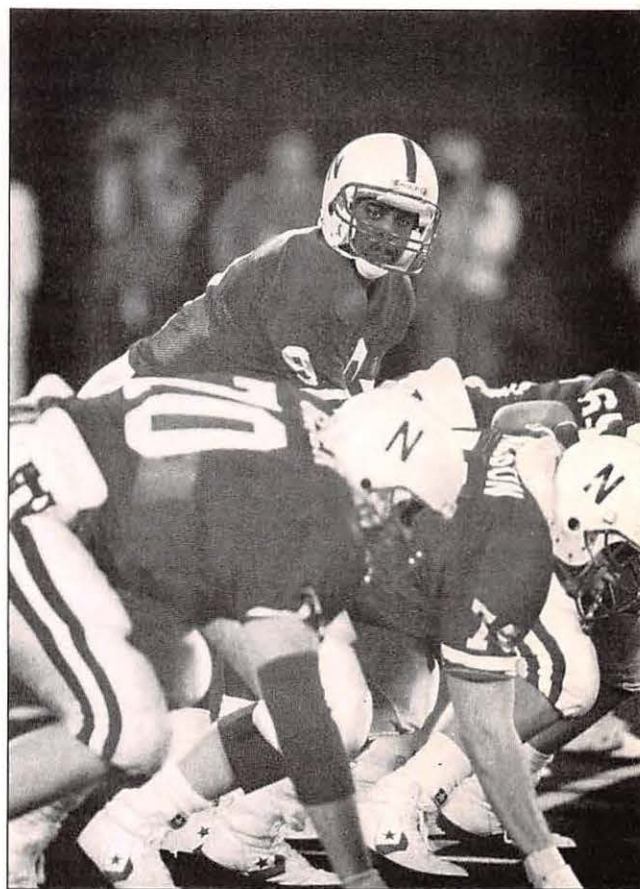
Barrios, a walkon from perennial power Omaha Creighton Prep, put the Cornhuskers on the scoreboard with the first, a 44-yarder. He cut the Aggie lead to 7-6 with the second, from 38 yards out, and he helped put out the fire — after an A&M flare-up that made the score 20-14 — with a 48-yarder midway through the fourth quarter.

The 48-yarder was the longest field goal, in competition, in Barrios' career. His previous best was a 47-yarder in high school.

Naturally, it was the longest of his career at Nebraska. Barrios had never kicked a field goal in a Cornhusker varsity game. He kicked for the junior varsity as a freshman two years ago and made one extra-point kick in a varsity game. But until the Kickoff Classic, no one could really know how he would respond to the pressure.

Barrios didn't even know he would have the chance until the night before the game. Nebraska had a brief workout at Giants Stadium, and when Cornhusker kickers coach Dan Young called for the first-team place-kicker,

Many schools have tried to catch up with the Big Red, but few succeed.



Barrios looked at Drennan and asked: "You or me?"

Before Drennan could respond, Barrios heard Young call his name.

From that point on, Barrios knew he'd be the one on whom Nebraska would rely. And after eliminating the inevitable jitters by missing his first field goal attempt of the game, a 35-yarder, he showed his Cornhusker teammates that their confidence wasn't misplaced.

The Cornhuskers' walkons are almost taken for granted now. They're accepted as part of Nebraska's tradition, like redshirting and hard work in Boyd Epley's state-of-the-art strength and conditioning facility.

A week before the Kickoff Classic, *The New York Times* ran a story on the front page of its sports section: "In Nebraska, Hardships Ease on Each Fall Saturday." The story discussed the unique relationship between the Cornhusker football team and the people of the state.

In it, Malcolm Moran wrote: "The

effort of the walkons provides the physical and emotional backbone of the Nebraska program.

"The walk-on system, with its thankless short-term demands and potential long-term benefits for determined prospects, is heavily publicized. It appeals to the farmers and ranchers whose conservative principles are based upon the worth of an honest day's work."

Such acknowledgments have become commonplace for the Cornhuskers. Their traditions, and the basis for their success, are no longer secrets.

Texas A&M had hoped to benefit from that fact. A victory would have enabled the Aggies to share some of that national attention. But on this particular night, at least, A&M wasn't up to the task. As the contest wore on, the Aggies wore down.

That's become another Nebraska tradition — the Cornhuskers try to be the strongest team in the second half. ■

Photo by Bill Kostroun

Spunky Utags Full of Fight

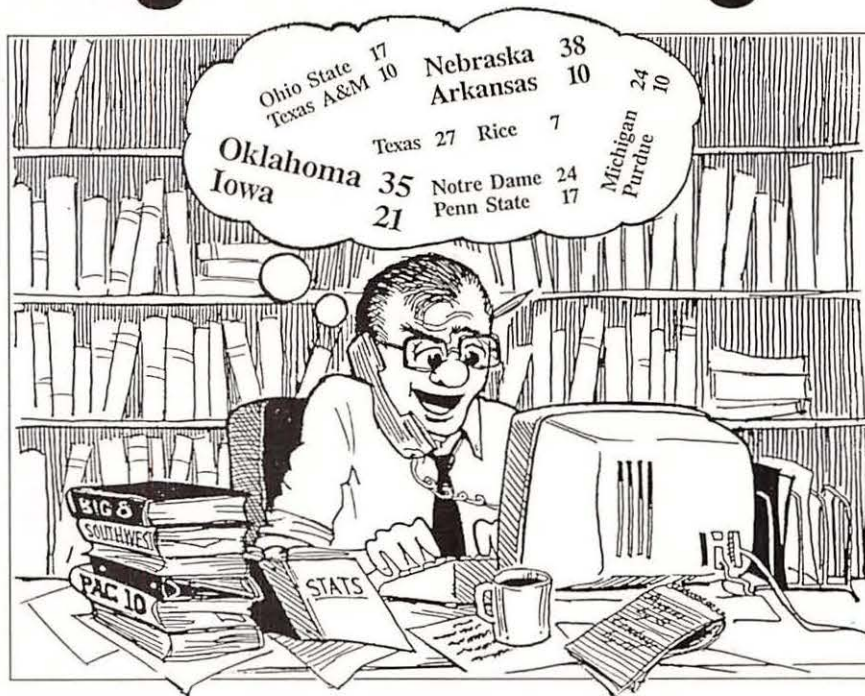
Mike Ingram, *Logan Herald Journal*, Logan, Utah: "I can safely say that the people around this part of the country are thrilled and apprehensive about this game and the next week in Columbia when Utah State plays Missouri. Utah State was rooting for Nebraska to kill Texas A&M in the Kickoff Classic so that the Huskers wouldn't be mad for their game. Utah State was also happy to see the Huskers on television so they could get a preview for the next week.

"Nebraska is a very physical team. They always have been and they always will be. They will be able to out-muscle the Aggies simply because of their depth and superior athletes. A lot of players for Utah State consider playing Nebraska in Lincoln to be the highlight of their careers. A lot of Aggie players went into shock when they saw all that red in Memorial Stadium last year. Steve Taylor presents so many problems for Utah State. He and the I-backs could beat Utah State by themselves. Nebraska's down-your-throat ground game will wear the Aggie defense into nothingness. But when Nebraska is No. 2 in the nation and Utah State is No. 111, it's obvious which team has the best athletes.

"As bad a beating as this game will be for the Aggies, the payday will help the football team more. The Aggies are saying they will play anybody, anywhere and not back down. They're not Division I-AA. They're Division I-A and proud of it. That's why they venture out of the PCAA and play teams like Nebraska and Missouri.

"They enjoy playing Brigham Young and Utah because they feel they can beat them. Nebraska is a different story. They're playing the Huskers for respect. Playing Nebraska helps the Aggies get up for BYU. The people in Utah honestly feel that a good game against Nebraska could be a springboard for Utah State to the California Bowl. They can play well and lose against the Huskers.

"I look for Nebraska to win, 41-21.



Utah State can move the ball against any defense in the country, including Nebraska. The big problem is an inexperienced defense. Brent Snyder has a great arm and he will give a lot of secondaries problems this season. If he hooks up with Kendal Smith, it's a touchdown. However, the first-game jitters will hurt the Aggie secondary and linebacking corps. If the Utah State defense doesn't control the ball against Nebraska, it will get ugly. Brent Snyder is their ace against the Huskers."

Kerry Bringham, *Cache County Citizen*, Provo, Utah: "I really think that the Utah State-Nebraska game will be exciting. This game is so important for Utah State in two respects. First, it gives the Utags some national attention and, if they play a good game, they gain some self-respect that they'll have all year. Second, it brings a great deal of revenue into the Utah State football program that can be used to improve the team year after year. If a big injury sidelines Brent Snyder or Kendal Smith, it could really hurt Utah State's chances for the California Bowl. If the Aggies do well

against the Huskers, it could really rejuvenate the program. I feel that Snyder will be able to throw at will against Nebraska. There won't be any intimidation this year when they go into Memorial Stadium. The players will take the attitude that this is a learning experience and that will help them. **Nebraska will win**, but I can't name the score."

John Jenkins, *Magna Times*, Magna, Utah: "These games give Utah State the chance to showcase that they are a real team and they do play Division I football. You always look forward to playing a Nebraska or BYU because they are always great teams. When you think of Nebraska, you think of a quality team. I feel that the PCAA is always overlooked when it comes to football. Playing the Big Eight gives Utah State exposure even if it is for one Saturday. There's nothing like playing a national power and feeling like you did your best. This could happen when the Aggies and Huskers lock up Saturday. **Nebraska will win**, but it will be a lot closer than people think."

Brad Fuqua, *Grand Island In-*

dependent, Grand Island, Neb.: "This game worries me a little bit. I can see the Huskers letting down a little bit after the Texas A&M clash and before the UCLA and Arizona State games that are coming up. I think that it's possible for the Huskers to look past the Utags, which could let Brent Snyder have a much bigger game than he normally would. I feel that Snyder will have a decent day, but that the Black Shirt secondary will shut him down more than anyone else this season. There will be a lot of pressure put on the Huskers secondary, but they will respond to it and do quite well. Let's call the score, **Nebraska 49, Utah State 10.** I really look for Nebraska to come out passing just to show a different side of their offense. The running game also needs to be showcased in the home opener. I really hope the Huskers will use Dana Brinson more than they have been. He could be a big part of a big offen-

sive day for Nebraska against Utah State."

Bruce Viergutz, Beatrice Sun, Beatrice, Neb.: "You can't help but say that Nebraska is an overwhelming choice to win this football game. They have so much more talent than the Aggies do. Don't get me wrong. Utah State is a much better team than they were last year in Lincoln. The secondary must be able to stop the Snyder-Smith bomb squad in order to have a great defensive effort. NU may suffer from a mental letdown, but since this is the Nebraska home opener, the Huskers will be *really* pumped up. If Nebraska can unleash the big plays on the Aggies, then you can turn out the lights and look forward to UCLA and Arizona State. Nebraska's ability to explode their offense at any time is a bomb that will destroy Utah State. I think **Nebraska will win, 49-12.**

Huskers Illustrated: "Look for

Nebraska to be Agged-out. Playing back-to-back Aggies (regardless whether they're Texags or Utags) will be an emotional drain. Lurking among the Utah State defenders will assuredly be Sandman's equal, some half-crazed Aggie Shirt who goes by Aggman and taunts opponents with Aggie jokes. The Huskers will be aghast.

"To expect Coach Shelton's squad to play efficient, error-free football against Nebraska is asking a lot. There just hasn't been enough time to work out the bugs in the passing game. It doesn't matter that it's Nebraska. You'd have to think U-State (or any passing team for that matter) would be a tad rusty in the first game. This is not a joke; this is reality.

"Still, it will be one of the greatest upsets since the 1984 Syracuse game. Utah State will hold Nebraska under 40 points. **Huskers 38, Utah State 7** in a reasonably well-played game." ■

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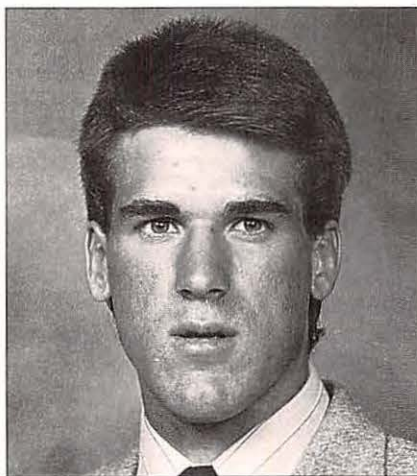
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Utah State Aggies

Quarterback Brent Snyder and wide receiver Kendal Smith are making some joyful noise in Logan. Snyder set a single-season school passing record last year of 2,887 yards, with 2,755 of that coming in his last 10 games (Snyder had 132 against Nebraska). The senior from Joliet, Ill., completed 53 percent of his passes in '87 and passed for more than 300 yards in four games. Snyder also hit 20 touchdowns. After making second-team all-conference last season, it's possible he could be the PCAA's best quarterback this fall.

He'll be throwing often to Smith, who caught 67 passes for 1,048 yards and seven touchdowns last year, including three for 29 yards against the Huskers. He could be an All-American. Smith also averaged over 11 yards per punt return, including a 77-yarder for a touchdown against UNLV. Flanker Patrick Newman is also a threat, having caught 46 passes for seven TDs last season.

Coach Chuck Shelton's offense



Quarterback Brent Snyder

should be worthy, with seven starters returning. The problem is the running game; the Utags had only two rushing TDs in '87. For the second year in a row, Utah State averaged less than 3 yards per carry, and other than tailback Brett Payne and fullback Timo Tagaloa, no other Utah running back had a run longer than 12 yards

last year.

U-State returns seven on defense, too.

The Utags are dangerously inexperienced in the secondary, and the defensive line could be a problem if tackle Brian Hunsaker and noseguard Tony Brown don't recover from knee injuries.

Key Matchups: Utah State's offensive line against the Husker pass rush. Snyder could make it interesting if he has time to throw.

Weakness: The running game is weak enough to ignore, although word is out Snyder will run a lot of draws. A young secondary could self-destruct against Steve Taylor.

Statistically Speaking: In two of the four games Snyder threw for over 300 yards, the Aggies could muster just two touchdowns. In a third game, they scored 25 points. While losing their first five games in '87, the Utags gave up an average of 40 points. In winning five of the last six, they surrendered an average of only 17 per contest. ■

The Report Card

| NU | POS. | UTAH |
|----|------|------|
| A | QB | B |
| B | RB | C- |
| A- | OL | C |
| A- | E | A- |
| B | DL | C |
| A | LB | B- |
| B+ | DB | C- |
| A | K | B |

Nebraska vs. Utah State

When: 1:30 p.m., Saturday, September 3, 1988.

Where: Lincoln, Nebraska.

Media Coverage: Husker Radio Network.

Utah State Facts: Coach — Chuck Shelton (Pittsburg State, 1961), enters his third season at the Aggie helm with an 8-14 overall record. School Colors — Navy Blue and White. Nickname — Aggies. Conference — PCAA/Big West. Enrollment — 11,500. Basic Offense — Pro-set. Basic Defense — 5-2.

The Series: Nebraska leads the series, 4-0, including a 56-12 thumping last year for the season opener in Lincoln. The closest that the Aggies have come to defeating the Huskers was a pair

of 21-point losses in 1966 (28-7 and the first meeting between the two schools) and 1979 (35-14). The other confrontation between these two teams occurred in 1971, when Bob Devaney's national champions manhandled the Utags, 42-6. Nebraska has never ventured to Logan to play on the Utags' home turf. In the series, Nebraska is averaging 40.3 points per game while the Aggies are averaging 9.8 per contest. Brent Snyder is not the only great quarterback in Utag history. Eric Hipple of the Detroit Lions led the Utags to a 14-14 stalemate at halftime in the 1979 game before the Huskers exploded for 21 unanswered points in the second half.

Huskers Headed Home

"We're really happy to win. It was a great game between two pretty good teams. Texas A&M had the edge early in the game, I thought, but we started to catch them in the second quarter.

"I thought we controlled the game in the second half.

"We feel the Kickoff Classic is a fine experience, and maybe now some other schools that have hesitated to accept an invitation will notice that we came twice. I was surprised when we were asked. I didn't think that we'd be asked again so soon. This was the first time we were eligible to return.

"I was a little reluctant to play. I wasn't looking for another challenge. But the players voted to come.

"A little bit of it might have been sentiment. We have a plaque at the training table that says half the money to build it came from the first Kick-off Classic, and the players might have a bit of a romantic notion about it.

"Also, we've got several East Coast players who wanted a chance to play out here and several Texas players who wanted the opportunity to play against Texas A&M.

"Steve Taylor played well. People compare him to Turner Gill, our quarterback when we played here in the Kickoff Classic in 1983. But you can't really compare a guy after four years to a guy with only three years. When Steve's done, I hope he'll compare with the best quarterbacks Nebraska has ever had. Steve has been very gifted since Day No. 1 at Nebraska. In terms of all around ability, he's one of the most gifted quarterbacks, physically, we've ever had at Nebraska. He's a little faster than Gill, though he's probably not the pure passer that either Dave Humm or Vince Ferragamo was.

"Steve is a senior; he's experienced. His sophomore year, he played a great game against Oklahoma. One guy can't be the whole show, but he did everything we asked of him.

"Last year, he had some super games. Against UCLA, Steve was

almost picture-perfect. Nobody hits a home run every time, but he didn't play badly against Oklahoma last season.

"Going into the game, we were a little bit puzzled as to what A&M would do. As for how they would use their three quarterbacks, we try not to prepare for just one player.

"Both teams were rolling the dice by playing in this game. Competition makes you better, but you can gain or lose momentum in a game like this.

"After we beat them in 1983 here, for example, Penn State had a below-average season, I believe.

"Those two outside linebackers for Texas A&M are great players.

"But we knew if they were appreciably better than ours, we had a problem." ■

CORNHUSKER 2-DEEP

OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------|-----|-----|
| SE | 19 Morgan Gregory | 6-0 | 185 | jr. |
| | 81 Chip Bahe | 5-10 | 175 | so. |
| LT | 62 Bob Sledge | 6-2 | 270 | sr. |
| | 78 Tom Punt | 6-8 | 270 | so. |
| LG | 65 Andy Keeler | 6-3 | 265 | sr. |
| | 53 Mark Antonietti | 6-2 | 265 | sr. |
| C | 68 Jake Young | 6-5 | 260 | jr. |
| | 59 Jeff Anderson | 6-4 | 270 | jr. |
| RG | 76 John Nelson | 6-1 | 260 | jr. |
| | 69 Bill Bobbora | 6-3 | 260 | jr. |
| RT | 70 Doug Glaser | 6-7 | 295 | jr. |
| | 77 Terry Eymann | 6-6 | 265 | so. |
| TE | 43 Todd Millikan | 6-3 | 245 | sr. |
| | 85 Monte Kratzenstein | 6-4 | 225 | jr. |
| QB | 9 Steve Taylor | 6-0 | 205 | sr. |
| | 14 Gerry Gdowski | 6-1 | 195 | jr. |
| FB | 25 Sam Schmidt | 6-1 | 230 | jr. |
| | 29 Bryan Carpenter | 5-10 | 200 | jr. |
| IB | 32 Ken Clark | 5-9 | 200 | jr. |
| | 20 Terry Rodgers | 5-7 | 170 | so. |
| WB | 21 Richard Bell | 6-0 | 195 | jr. |
| | 31 Jamie Worden | 5-10 | 175 | sr. |
| PK | 16 Chris Drennan | 5-9 | 180 | jr. |
| | 44 Gregg Barrios | 5-8 | 180 | so. |

DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|------|-----|-----|
| OLB | 89 Broderick Thomas | 6-3 | 235 | sr. |
| | 42 Jeff Mills | 6-3 | 220 | jr. |
| LT | 84 Willie Griffin | 6-3 | 275 | sr. |
| | 56 Joe Sims | 6-4 | 265 | so. |
| MG | 74 Mike Murray | 5-10 | 240 | jr. |
| | 63 Brian Edgren | 6-1 | 260 | so. |
| RT | 95 Paul Brungardt | 6-7 | 255 | so. |
| | 91 Kent Wells | 6-5 | 285 | so. |
| OLB | 93 Jon Marco | 6-1 | 220 | sr. |
| | 88 Mike Croel | 6-3 | 215 | so. |
| SLB | 55 Randall Jobman | 6-3 | 230 | jr. |
| | 47 LeRoy Etienne | 6-1 | 230 | jr. |
| WLB | 40 Pat Tyrance | 6-2 | 230 | so. |
| | 49 Chris Caliendo | 6-3 | 240 | jr. |
| LCB | 8 Lorenzo Hicks | 6-0 | 195 | sr. |
| | 28 John Custard | 5-9 | 165 | sr. |
| RCB | 5 Tahaun Lewis | 5-11 | 170 | so. |
| | 10 Charles Fryar | 5-10 | 175 | sr. |
| SS | 17 Reggie Cooper | 6-3 | 200 | so. |
| | 23 Mark Blazek | 6-2 | 200 | sr. |
| S | 4 Tim Jackson | 6-0 | 190 | so. |
| | 23 Mark Blazek | 6-2 | 200 | sr. |
| P | 46 John Kroeker | 5-11 | 175 | sr. |
| | 48 Scott Beckler | 6-0 | 185 | so. |

AGGIE 2-DEEP

OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|----|--------------------|------|-----|-----|
| FL | 3 Patrick Newman | 6-0 | 194 | jr. |
| | 7 Tracey Jenkins | 6-0 | 190 | fr. |
| LT | 72 Dan Hill | 6-7 | 265 | jr. |
| | 73 Ed Silva | 6-5 | 260 | fr. |
| LG | 79 Jerry Brown | 6-5 | 275 | sr. |
| | 54 John Stephens | 6-4 | 255 | jr. |
| C | 52 Sid Roberts | 6-3 | 247 | sr. |
| | 55 Nathan Kaczor | 6-2 | 260 | jr. |
| RG | 75 Dave Walker | 6-3 | 270 | sr. |
| | 56 Mike Vivoli | 6-4 | 265 | fr. |
| RT | 64 Steve Osborne | 6-4 | 270 | jr. |
| | 77 Shannon White | 6-8 | 300 | jr. |
| TE | 83 Ryan Duve | 6-8 | 225 | so. |
| | 5 Keith Roberson | 6-2 | 220 | so. |
| QB | 12 Brent Snyder | 6-4 | 218 | sr. |
| | 8 Russ Widerburg | 6-0 | 180 | sr. |
| FB | 38 Timo Tagalao | 5-11 | 221 | sr. |
| | 31 Todd Richardson | 6-1 | 240 | jr. |
| HB | 40 Brent Payne | 6-0 | 190 | jr. |
| | 20 Demetrius Brown | 5-8 | 186 | jr. |
| SE | 9 Kendal Smith | 5-9 | 185 | sr. |
| | 1 Rod Moore | 6-1 | 193 | fr. |
| PK | 4 Russ Moody | 5-10 | 165 | jr. |
| | 19 Louie Agular | 6-3 | 200 | sr. |

DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|----|---------------------|------|-----|-----|
| OL | 94 Tom Hansen | 6-3 | 220 | so. |
| | 88 Jeff Haugen | 6-6 | 185 | fr. |
| LT | 96 Drew McCandless | 6-6 | 238 | so. |
| | 99 Brian Hunsaker | 6-5 | 255 | sr. |
| NG | 74 Rob VanDePol | 6-3 | 245 | fr. |
| | 98 Tony Brown | 6-2 | 263 | jr. |
| RT | 86 Jeff Hunsaker | 6-5 | 245 | jr. |
| | 78 Joe Bagulo | 6-5 | 240 | fr. |
| E | 93 Todd Thornton | 6-3 | 220 | sr. |
| | 58 Tim Rath | 6-3 | 240 | so. |
| IL | 42 Scott Sbranti | 5-11 | 215 | so. |
| | 66 John Lowe | 6-3 | 205 | fr. |
| IL | 48 Kevin Bouwman | 6-1 | 225 | so. |
| | 53 Steve Davis | 6-2 | 225 | sr. |
| LC | 22 Scott Munson | 5-10 | 175 | so. |
| | 46 Dexter Pointer | 5-10 | 167 | fr. |
| RC | 46 Dexter Pointer | 5-10 | 167 | fr. |
| | 16 Chris Brantley | 6-0 | 185 | so. |
| SS | 25 Toby Tyler | 6-1 | 186 | fr. |
| | 25 Emmett Bonamarte | 6-1 | 195 | jr. |
| FS | 15 Travis Clark | 6-3 | 187 | so. |
| | 6 Barry Kent | 6-2 | 195 | sr. |
| P | 19 Louie Agular | 6-3 | 200 | sr. |
| | 34 Rusty Carlsen | 6-2 | 205 | fr. |

Freshman Jon Bostick, a split end from Interlake High School in Bellevue, Wash., worked on his pass routes this summer with Green Bay Packers quarterback Marc Wilson.

Bostick, whose home is near the Seattle Seahawks' training camp, also spent time studying with All-Pro wide receiver Steve Largent of the Seahawks.

When Bostick left Bellevue to report for preseason camp at Nebraska, Wilson called to wish him luck.

Bostick was the Washington high school Offensive Player of the Year.

Tim Herman, a Super-State linebacker from Lincoln, Neb., Southeast High School, has decided to call it quits at Nebraska. Herman sat out last season, a casualty of the NCAA's Proposition 48.

He did well enough in two semesters at Nebraska to be eligible this fall, but he didn't report for the team's annual Photo Day. Herman says he didn't think he was ready to play football at Nebraska and was considering attending junior college.

Wayne Keneipp, an offensive lineman from Chicago, also has quit the team. Keneipp, who would have been a freshman in eligibility, sat out last season and underwent surgery on both shoulders. He also suffered a badly burned arm working during the summer.

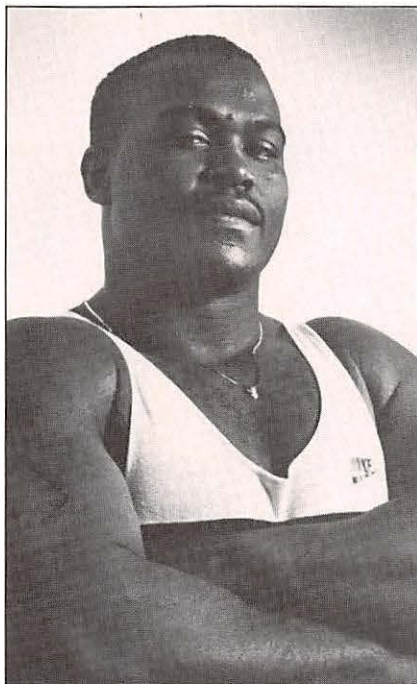
"Wayne reported (for fall camp) and then decided to quit," says Husker Coach Tom Osborne. "I never did get to see him. He was gone so fast, I never did talk to him."

Victor Stachmus, a Husker recruit from McAlester, Okla., visited Lincoln prior to the beginning of preseason camp. Stachmus was hospitalized because of what was diagnosed as leukemia last spring but says he's feeling well and should be ready to enroll second semester. He's been undergoing chemotherapy treatments.

"The doctors feel the leukemia is in remission. He'll be here and he'll play next spring," Osborne says.

Stachmus will go on scholarship in January if all goes as expected.

The Cornhusker freshman team has a surprise walkon, John Parrella, a Super-State defensive lineman from



Lawrence Pete

Grand Island, Neb., Central Catholic.

Parrella, who was to get a look at tight end and defensive tackle, signed a letter of intent with Colorado, but the Buffaloes pulled his scholarship less than a week before the start of training camp. They said Parrella had not made satisfactory progress in the classroom as a high school senior.

However, Parrella met the freshman eligibility requirements under the NCAA's Proposition 48.

Parrella, 6-foot-5, 232 pounds, received honorable mention on the *USA Today* and *Super Prep* high school All-American teams. *The Sporting News* rated him one of the top recruits in the Big Eight.

"We were really pleased to see John, and he tested well," says Osborne. "He's got a lot of ability."

"I think his heart was at Nebraska, and he's pleased to be here."

Kevin Ramaekers, a freshman lineman from Norfolk, Neb., Catholic, apparently will have to sit out this season because of Proposition 48.

Who are the heaviest Huskers?

Based on the preseason weigh-ins, offensive tackles Doug Glaser (293), Steve Engstrom (286) and Ray Reifenthath (286) and defensive tackle Willie Griffin, who didn't have an official weight listed. But he was in the "280-pound range," according to Boyd Epley, the strength and conditioning coach.

Despite his considerable bulk, Griffin is one of the most powerful athletes on the team, pound-for-pound. "He's not real strong or extremely fast, but he has explosiveness," says Epley.

The heaviest freshman football player was Doug Waddell, a walkon offensive tackle from Columbia, S.C. Waddell weighed in at 277 pounds.

Former Oklahoma linebacker Brian Bosworth spares the Cornhuskers, for the most part, in his controversial, soon-to-be-released book *The Boz*.

The Boz says of the Big Eight: "They ought to kick the junk schools out and make the division look a little better. They could call it the Big Three and the Little Five."

"The three would be us (Oklahoma), Nebraska and maybe a rotation between Colorado and Oklahoma State, whoever is any good that year."

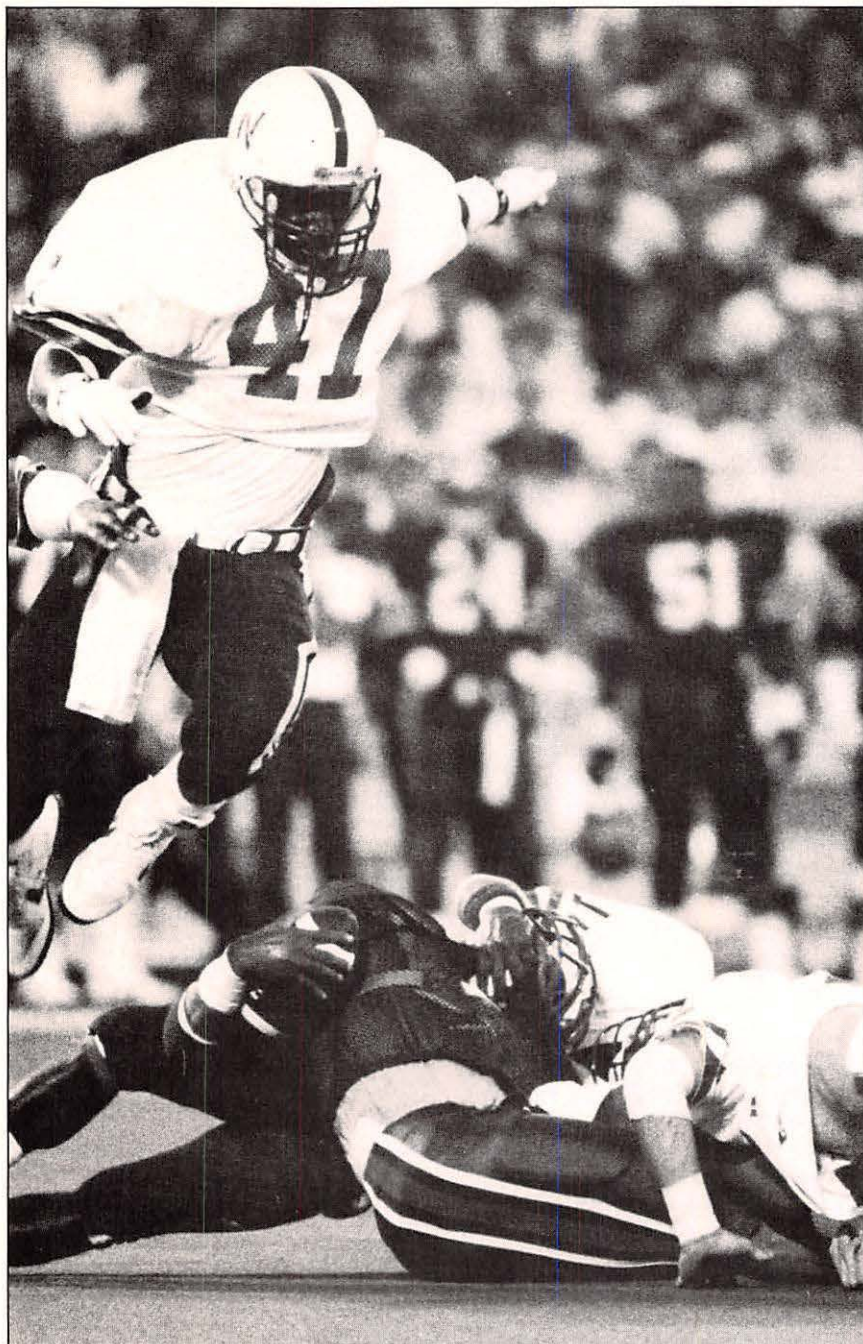
The Sooners defeated Nebraska in each of the three seasons Bosworth played at Oklahoma, and "that felt good," he writes. "Three years at Oklahoma and three times we kicked Nebraska's ass, which isn't easy. Those were tough Nebraska teams."

Bosworth says almost all of Oklahoma's Big Eight games "were like varsity versus junior varsity," which is what "made the Nebraska games so great. You're glad to be picking on somebody your own size."

Osborne says he has no intention of either buying or reading the book.

Nate Turner, sophomore split end from Chicago, was recruited by Southern Cal as a tailback. "I felt it was an honor, being (considered as) a tailback for a school like that, with all those Heisman Trophy winners," says Turner, a *Parade Magazine* high school All-American wingback.

At 6-1 and 218 pounds, Turner has the size to be a tailback or I-back, but he's never played running back. ■



Blitzkrieg or Kamikaze?

TOM OSBORNE LIKES TO BLITZ ALL RIGHT,
BUT IT'S THE SUICIDE MISSION HE AVOIDS.

To 'B' or not to 'B,' that is the question.

This time, it's a football question and 'B' stands for blitz. The problem may not be as old as Shakespeare, but it's been around since Amos Alonzo Stagg. Yet, in all that time, nobody has come up with the perfect answer.

Most Nebraska fans love the thrill of watching the Black Shirt linebackers crash through to sack the quarterback.

(In the working press box, where silence is demanded, I've been known to draw icy stares after hollering "Blitz!" when the Cornhusker opponent faced third-and-long and I feared a completion because of the lack of a sufficient pass rush.)

But it's a thrill us Big Red fans of the blitz are most often denied. Nebraska comes with the all-out rush less often than most other teams. Tom Osborne figures we ought to get enough thrill out of victory. He isn't convinced that blitzing and winning go hand in hand.

As usual, the man who taught a course in statistics during his professorial days has the facts to back up that feeling. Osborne also has the record to prove his point, never having lost more than three games in any of his 15 previous seasons as the Husker grid boss.

(Which is why you ought to be glad Osborne is the coach and not me or the guy you sit next to at Memorial Stadium who is also always yelling for the Black Shirts to blitz.)

"It's a gamble when you blitz," Osborne explains. "If the linebackers get there and sack the quarterback, you look great. But, if you don't, you can be giving up six points."

Osborne said he likes to "mix it up," but admits that "we probably don't blitz as much as most teams. It's just a difference in philosophy. You really have to have great people in your secondary who can play man-to-man pass coverage very well if you're going to do a lot of blitzing. When you commit your linebackers, you have to play 'man' behind them and play it fairly tight and hope you don't get burned."

Osborne remembers an Iowa State

game in the mid-70s as a point-prover. Defensive Coordinator Lance Van Zandt designed a special blitzing scheme to use against the Cyclones.

"Lance called it the 'goal-line out.' It was really an eight-man front with a couple of linebackers blitzing up the middle," Osborne recalled. "Well, Iowa State had third-and-15 on our 25 when he called it. But, instead of a pass, Iowa State called a draw play up the middle. The fullback ran right by the linebackers and went all the way in to score. And, we lost the game."

End of formation.

"The problem with the blitz," current NU defensive coordinator Charlie McBride explains, "is that when the defensive backs are playing man-to-man on the potential pass receivers, they aren't able to watch anything else. A runner on a draw play can be a long way down the field before they're even aware it's not a pass."

Osborne compared blitzing and the passing game — something else his Huskers don't overdo.

"Although we're not a team that is structured to throw a lot," Osborne says, "if we're hitting 55, 60 percent of our passes and have a low percentage of interceptions, we're going to throw more than if we're hitting 45 percent."

"The same thing is true when it comes to blitzing," he added. "If you're a moderate blitzing team like us, and you are successful at it, you tend to do more of it. If you're not getting there (to the quarterback), then you are likely to shy away, even from the five or 10 blitzes a game we are likely to use."

Even when successful with a blitz or two, there is danger, McBride warns.

"You can be lulled into a false sense of security," he says. "You call a blitz and it works. You sack the guy. That's great. You can do that four times in a row and feel wonderful. But, if on the fifth time you don't get to him and he completes a 50-yard play to beat you, then the previous sacks don't have much meaning."

Osborne says most of the great defensive teams have not been heavy blitzing teams.



When the blitz works (here, Marc Manford against South Carolina in 1986) it can be a thing of beauty.

"Instead, they play very solid, basic, sound defense," he says. "We're not going to let the 97-yard drive (by Florida State in the Fiesta Bowl) panic us. We've had pretty much the same basic defensive philosophy here at Nebraska for the past 25 years. We've had different defensive coordinators, but we've never been a heavy blitzing team. And I think we're probably, over those 25 years, among the top defensive teams in the country. Maybe even No. 1. And certainly no worse than No. 2 or 3. So, we're likely to stay with what got us here."

McBride says an increased emphasis on the pass in college football has brought about one change — a search for recruits who excel as defensive backs.

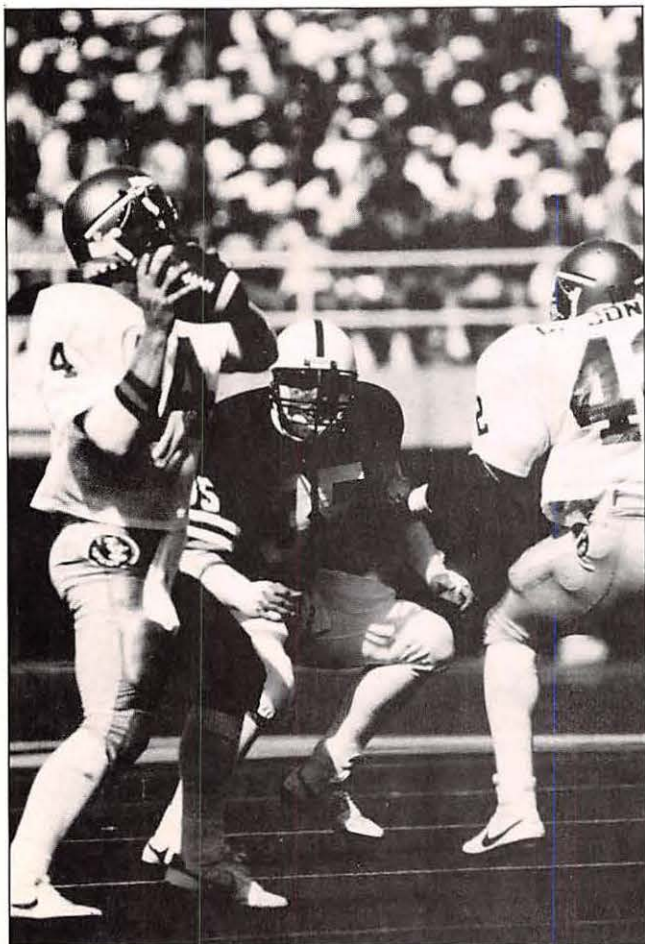
"It wasn't too many years ago," McBride noted, "that most defensive backs were converted running backs who didn't make the offensive lineup. A lot of them were walk-ons. They were kids who had played I-back in

high school but who didn't have the size to play that position in college. But they did have the speed, so they switched to the defensive secondary. And a lot of them developed into really good football players. Now we are recruiting players specifically for the defensive secondary."

McBride says that was caused by the change in the offensive schemes of many Big Eight Conference teams.

"In years past," he says, "the Big Eight was primarily a running conference. Overall, it was a power league. When I was coaching in the Big Ten (at Wisconsin), it was even more that way."

Then Hayden Fry arrived at Iowa. "That's when the Big Ten switched to a greater emphasis on the pass," McBride says. "In recent years, the way Big Eight teams like Iowa State, Kansas and Oklahoma State, among others, have developed the passing offense, you have to have a better defense against the pass. So we're



What would you do? Blitz your linebackers or drop them into coverage? Kevin Parsons (35) mostly dropped back in 1985 against Florida State, but the Seminoles still won.

after people who can cover."

McBride says some of the early secondary recruits who come to mind are a pair of Brians — Washington and Davis.

"Each year since we've gone out to recruit people who are defensive backs," he says. "Of this year's group, Charles Fryar was originally recruited as an athlete, not for any one position. He had very good high school statistics as a running back. So he started out at I-back. But, because of his overall size, plus the fact that he is a great jumper and has an uncanny ability to change direction, Charles is turning into a fine defensive back."

"I would guess that if you look at the professional ranks, you would find that 50 percent of the defensive backs were some kind of running back in high school," McBride added. "That was probably their main interest. Then they got to college and found themselves down the line a little bit

as a running back and felt that their best chance to get more playing time was in the secondary. So they switched."

McBride says starting cornerback Lorenzo Hicks is a good example.

"Lorenzo was a quarterback, a split receiver and a free safety in high school. He had some experience in the secondary and that's what we recruited him for."

Osborne says the need to blitz frequently last season was reduced because of a far-better-than-average pass rush.

"With Neil Smith and Tim Rother we managed that phase of the game quite well," Osborne says. "On the other hand, we were not overwhelming in the secondary. We were pretty good, but we didn't have a lot of great man-to-man players."

"This year, I think we'll be a little better back there," Osborne added, "but I don't think we'll ever be a team

that blitzes 50 percent of the time. We may blitz a little bit more this season, however."

McBride says he is trying to develop some pass rushers to replace Smith and Rother.

"We're working on it," McBride says, "but I can't tell how good we'll be until we've played a couple of games. Mike Murray (at middle guard) is quick and strong, but he's awfully short. At tackle, where we have the bigger kids like (Paul) Brungardt and (Kent) Wells and (Ray) Valadao, we've got a chance to have a good pass rush team."

Osborne says the biggest problem a pass-rushing defensive lineman faces is the illegal holding by the offensive linemen.

"The rule changes that have been made in recent years regarding illegal use of the hands have certainly favored the offense," Osborne says. "And not just to the benefit of the passing teams, but also on the run."

"Now," Osborne explained, "a blocker can extend his arms. Any time you can do that, then it's a little more difficult to detect holding. Generally speaking, if they keep their arms inside the cylinder of the body — and while doing that they reach inside and grab the front of the defensive man's jersey and steer him around — as long as their arm isn't flopped over to the outside, the officials seldom call holding. That has made life a lot more difficult for the pass rush teams."

McBride says a good pass rush is critical, especially if a blitz is called.

"No matter how good you are at man-to-man coverage," he says, "if the guys rushing the passer don't get to him quick, then the receiver is going to get open."

McBride acknowledges that because his Black Shirts seldom blitz "we don't have a tremendous repertoire of blitzes. We have six or seven different blitzing schemes. A lot of teams may have 10 or 15. But, we do get a lot more repetition in practice on the ones we have, so when we do run them we've usually had some success."

McBride says Nebraska's basic defensive philosophy has always been

to stop the running game first.

"You really want to shut the run down," he says, "because any team that can run the football against you won't ever bother to throw it. It doesn't do any good to have a great pass defense if you can't stop the run. If they can run, they don't need to pass."

McBride says that once you shut down a team's running game, "they are forced to pass and you can gear your defense accordingly, concentrating on the pass while not worrying so much about the run. And, in college football there are not a whole ton of great throwing quarterbacks, guys who are going to be consistent."

McBride says much of the "shall we blitz or shouldn't we" decision is based on the speed of the opposing quarterback.

McBride says much of the "shall we blitz or shouldn't we" decision is based on the speed of the opposing quarterback.

"If the guy is a great scrambler and runner, beware," McBride says. "I remember when I was at Wisconsin and we played against Bert Jones from LSU. We blitzed him a lot, but he had great mobility. He'd get away and then kill us."

"But, when we played Illinois a few years ago, I didn't feel that (Jack) Truetaux had great running ability," McBride added. "So, we were able to blitz more and make him hurry his throw. But, when we play UCLA this fall, (Troy) Aikman is a guy who would make you a little shaky. You might blitz him and get there, but he has such great movement he might beat you by getting away long enough to throw to an open receiver or take off and run."

When McBride does call for a blitz,

he says he tries to stay away from predictability.

"Some downs we'll blitz, some downs we'll go to maximum coverage, some downs we'll have an in-line stunt, but without committing the linebackers," he says. "I try to mix it up and not give the opponent a chance to say, 'On this down, they're sure to blitz.' Or, that we won't be blitzing on another particular down."

What about the 97-yard drive on a series of pass completions by Florida State in the closing moments of last season's Fiesta Bowl to which Osborne referred?

"We blitzed a couple of times during that series," McBride says. "But the touchdown they scored was my fault. We weren't going to blitz them on that down, but we had an in-line stunt on."

"But, instead of putting our defensive backs in a zone defense, I should have put them in what we call a 'man under.' That's where we would take away the slant-in (receiver). That way our safety would have been protected from the inside routes by playing an inside 'man' technique. In other words, we wouldn't have let that guy in there."

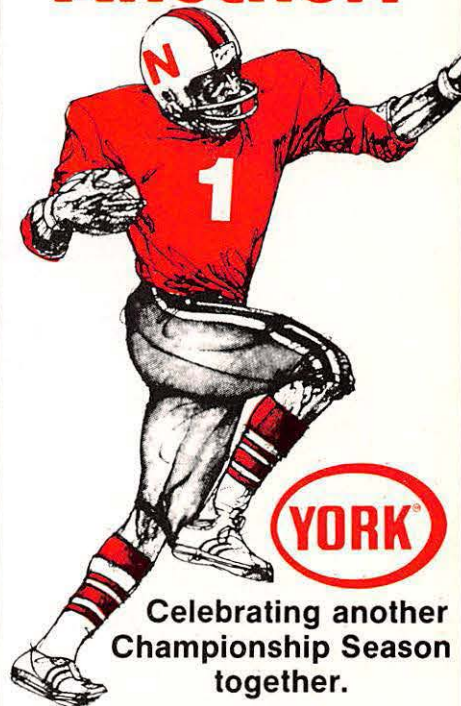
"You see," McBride continued in explanation, "in a zone, you're playing back off the guy and he can break in front of you. Then, if the pass is on target, they've got a chance of a completion and the defender isn't in a very good position to knock it down or intercept."

"I was on the sideline debating and it was one of those things that I'd better call something and I made what turned out to be the wrong decision. It's a guessing game and I guessed wrong in that instance."

McBride says the ending of that game still gives him nightmares.

"First, of course, I was bothered by our fumble on their one yard line," he says. "But that didn't bother me anywhere near as much as allowing them to go 97 yards for a touchdown. You can't let a football team do that. They were good enough to do it, but so were we good enough to stop them. That series upset me more than any other in my coaching career." ■

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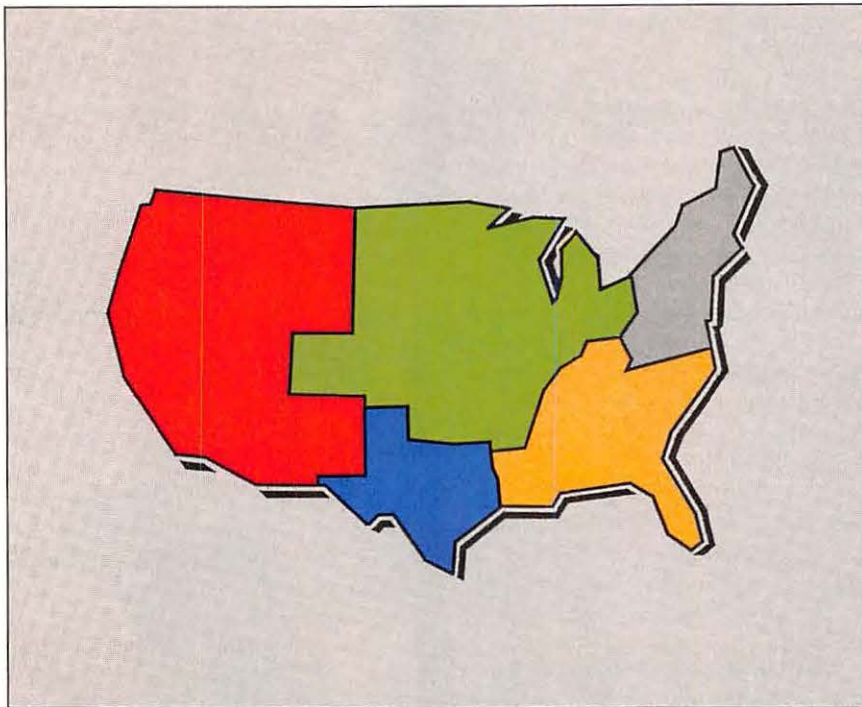
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RECRUITING BY REGIONS

James Hale



The glamour boys of football: the passing quarterbacks. We all know girls love that big, strong quarterback with the golden arm that can hurl a football 70 yards in the air. Come to think of it, college football coaches love that quarterback, too. The pros love them even more. If you're a quarterback who possesses that golden arm and you happen to have the ability to hit a receiver every now and then, you can count on being a millionaire before you're 25.

No team on the college level turns out great quarterbacks like Brigham Young. All-Americans like Marc Wilson, Gifford Nielson, Jim McMahon, Steve Young and Robbie Bosco led the Cougars to an unexpected level in college football. Talented QBs such as those keep the Cougars in the Top 20 most of the time and even earned them a national championship in 1984. So what does a quarterback factory look for in a prep quarterback?

"The No. 1 thing is to find somebody who can hit the open receiver," says BYU recruiting coordinator Chris Pella. "A lot of guys have strong arms, but you want to take it a step further and see if he's got the ability to hit the open receiver downfield. Many high school quarterbacks build up their

stats by constantly dumping the ball off to the halfback coming out of the backfield. I know that's a necessity at times, but you don't want a quarterback who doesn't want to look downfield.

"Don't get me wrong, a strong arm counts for a great deal. We also think mobility is important. Young and McMahon used their feet as allies. They had quick feet that kept them out of trouble with a pass rush and constantly opened up new possibilities for them."

WEST

Perry Klein (6-3, 180, 4.8) of Carson, Calif., is an interesting story. A year ago, Klein threw for 3,900 yards for Pacific Palisades. However, for the 1988 season, Klein decided he would take his talents to always-powerful Carson High, where they turn out 10 to 15 major college prospects a year. The transfer has caused a huge problem between the two schools as Palisades has accused Carson of illegal recruiting. Despite the off-the-field problem, Klein is at Carson right now, but he is having trouble adjusting. He's currently running second

team to Fred Gatlon as he learns the system. Most believe that Gatlon will eventually move to another position, but don't be surprised early if they share time. College recruiters won't be discouraged, however; Klein is still a big-time prospect.

Brad Eaddy (6-4, 195, 4.9) of San Diego Madison is rated right behind Klein in California. Eaddy passed for 2,259 yards, hitting 54 percent of his tosses for 18 TDs. Greg Willig (6-6, 190, 4.9) of St. Paul Whittier, Calif., is a great physical talent who connected on 59 percent of his passes for 1,400 yards. Willig comes from an athletic family that has brothers playing at Southern Cal and Washington.

Puyallup, Wash., claims to have the top QB on the coast in Billy Joe Holbert. At 6-3, 205 with 4.7 speed, Holbert has all the athletic tools needed to succeed on the college level. A year ago, Holbert passed for 2,400 yards and 22 TDs while running for seven more. If that isn't enough, Billy Joe hit .415 on the baseball diamond and could get a scholarship in that sport. Stanford, Notre Dame, Miami and Washington are in the running.

If you're looking for a quarterback who can see over the line of scrimmage without much problem, then check out Brett Powers of Glendale Cactus, Ariz. Powers stands in at 6-6 and weighs 200 pounds. He can play, claiming MVP honors at the Sun Devil football camp this summer. Every school on the coast wants him.

If you're wondering who the top all-around quarterback in the country is, try Curtis Conway of Hawthorne, Calif. In our last issue, I ranked Conway as the top option quarterback prospect in the country. Well, he just might be the top passing QB prospect in the country, too. No matter where Conway goes, he will be a dream come true for that college program.

SOUTHWEST

It's the year of the quarterback in Texas. It's been a long time since so many quarterbacks headlined a prep season. Heading the list is Reggie Per-

ry of Denison, Tex., a versatile quarterback who has every college program in the country looking his way.

"The great thing about Reggie is that he can run any kind of offense," says Dennison head coach Marty Griswell. "We've always utilized his great arm, but last year, we put in some option, and he took to it like he had been running it all his life."

At 6-2 and 190 pounds, Perry has drawn the attention of just about everybody because he also has 4.6 speed. He proved his versatility a year ago by practically splitting the 1,600 total yards right down the middle. His grades are also attractive. Perry says he's not looking past any formation, and that he definitely wants to go to a school that travels. All the Southwest Conference schools will get a look along with Oklahoma, Nebraska and Notre Dame.

If for some reason you don't think Perry is the No. 1 passing quarterback in the Lone Star state, then you are leaning towards Lance Landry (6-1, 180, 4.6) of Port Arthur Jefferson. Landry rallied his team from an 0-6 start to the playoffs by throwing for 2,200 yards and 18 TDs. He's used to throwing the ball, as Jefferson puts it in the air over 50 percent of the time, and not surprisingly Lance is looking for a college that wants to put it up.

Another strong-armed QB is Tommy Maddox (6-5, 185, 4.8) of Hurst Bell. A diamond in the rough, Maddox has the attention of college recruiters because of his slingshot arm and because his best football days are ahead of him. He threw for a little less than 1,000 yards a year ago in an offense that kept the ball on the ground. This year, Maddox will turn it loose. Louisiana State has a big lead in this recruiting battle since Tommy was born in Louisiana and would like to return for his college days. If the Tigers somehow botch this one, then BYU, Notre Dame, Miami, Texas A&M and UCLA will gladly step in and take Maddox to their campus.

Other notable passing quarterbacks in Texas include Chris Bias (6-0, 185, 4.7) at Houston Forest Brook, who showed his explosiveness by setting a 5A single-game passing record

in Texas when he threw for 485 yards. Chris finished 1987 with 2,010 yards, hitting 114 of 230 passes for 10 TDs and 11 interceptions. Darren Woods (6-3, 190, 4.5) of Dallas Roosevelt is a great athlete who can put the ball 65 yards in the air. He completed 88 passes for 1,218 yards and eight TDs a year ago. Roger Davis (6-4, 185, 4.7) of Hitchcock is another with a strong arm and a solid junior season behind him. Davis connected on 114 of 219 passes for 16 TDs while only being intercepted seven times. Rene Ovalle (6-2, 200, 4.8) of Larado United is a big-time sleeper who hit 2,200 yards and 22 TDs while running for 11 in '87.

MIDLANDS

Some of the top quarterback talent will come out of the Midlands in 1988. You have to believe that Duke Tobin (6-1, 180, 4.7) of Arlington Heights Hersey, Ill., understands the game of football. Duke's father Bill is the director of player personnel for the Chicago Bears and Uncle Vince is their defensive coordinator. Among the numerous things Duke has learned from the Bears sideline is the ability to win, which he proved last year when he led his team to the 6A state championship with a 26-6 win over always tough East St. Louis. Duke is one of those guys who can always lead you down the field by either running or passing in the last two minutes of the game. This three-sportster will play wherever he wants. He can go deep and is getting a lot of practice operating the run-and-shoot right now. Don't be surprised if he winds up at Illinois.

Folks in Goshen, Ind., are raving about Rich Mirer, a super athlete who stars at quarterback, but who thinks he is a kamikaze at safety. College recruiters think that Mirer is a can't-miss prospect behind center, but they know they have an ace in the hole if things don't work out there because of his big-play ability in the secondary. Mirer (6-3, 205, 4.6) has a cannon for an arm that allowed him to throw for

2,516 yards a year ago while hitting 159 of 304 passes. Mirer does have a problem with interceptions, throwing 17. However, that problem can be corrected when he goes to a college program where he doesn't have to do everything by himself. Oh, by the way, Mirer intercepted five passes from his safety spot and got in on 45 tackles and kicked three field goals for good measure.

If you like solid blood lines, then go with Doug Musgrove of Grand Junction, Colo. Doug's brother Bill starts at quarterback for Oregon and he led the Ducks out of the cellar of the Pacific 10. Doug has great size at 6-4 and weighs a solid 200 pounds, yet can cover the 40 yards in 4.65 seconds. As a junior, Musgrove set the state of Colorado on fire, hitting 60 percent of his passes while throwing for 2,510 yards and 27 TDs, garnering all-conference honors in football and basketball. Doug's got his life in order as he's ranked No. 1 in his class academically and calls his own shots on and off the field. Indiana, Southern Cal, Purdue, Miami, Stanford, Florida and Oregon are in the running.

The pride of St. Louis is Chris Livingstone at County Day High School. Livingstone (6-4, 218, 5.0) has only lost two games during his high school career, leading his team to 9-1 and 13-1 records. Chris has all the tools you look for in a college quarterback: strong arm, great size and the ability to read defenses well. In '87, Chris hit on 57 percent of his passes for a little over 1,400 yards. Livingstone is academically inclined and wants to go to Stanford if they will offer. Just in case, Chris is also considering Ohio State, Florida State, Duke and Kentucky.

SOUTHEAST

The pride of the South is in Louisiana and North Carolina. Chad Loup (6-2, 197, 4.7) of Baton Rouge is rated one of the Top 30 players in the nation. Chad has as many tools to hurt you as any prospect this year. He has good height, can throw for distance,

is smart, runs well, can run, is accurate and leads well. Basically, he can do it all for today's multifunction offenses. Chad already has 4,987 career yards and has scored 48 TDs, 20 rushing the football.

"Chad looks like a linebacker, but he's a quarterback," says high school coach Willis Stell. "The best thing about him is that he is really a combination of everything."

Louisiana State is obviously strong for this youngster, but Notre Dame and Miami also will figure on this fine student/athlete.

In Burlington Cummings, N.C., Chuckie Burnett (6-1, 175, 4.7) has everyone's attention. Burnett possesses a big-time arm that allows him to throw the football through the wall. In '87 Chuckie hit on 64 percent of his passes for 1,551 yards and 19 TDs. He has quick feet and is such a good athlete that if things don't work out

at quarterback then there shouldn't be any problem finding another spot on the field for him. Every school in the south wants Chuckie.

Gary Clayton (6-1, 175, 4.6) of Birmingham, Ala., is a gifted athlete who passed for 1,670 yards and 20 TDs a year ago. Clayton is so good athletically that he will also have a chance at college basketball. Jason Palmer (6-2, 175) of Vidalia is the best in Georgia. Niceville, Fla., boasts the talent of Kenny Belder (6-3, 190, 4.6), a raw carrot who may keep the whole state dangling as he picks an offense and a school.

EAST

Brian Fortay of East Brunswick, N.J., has opened up endless possibilities with his future. At 6-3, 205, For-

tay is considered by many the top passing quarterback in the country. A John Kelly clone, he can throw a football 70 yards in the air. Fortay completed 166 passes a year ago, completing over 58 percent of his tosses with only four interceptions. He can also throw for distance, hitting five TD passes for 60 yards or more and finishing the '87 season with 1,500 yards in passing.

Fortay can have his pick of schools, but look for Penn State to battle Notre Dame, Pitt, Michigan and Purdue for this future million dollar QB.

Ed Hesson of Burlington City, N.J., is another who is drawing comparisons to NFL greats like Marino and Montana because of his quick release. The 6-2, 195-pounder has good quickness and good feet and runs a respectable 4.8 in the 40-yard dash. As a three-year starter, Hesson has completed 52 percent of his passes and a year ago threw for over 1,300 yards and 14 TDs. Penn State, Pitt and Syracuse are all after this youngster.

At Cherry Hill East, N.J., Glenn Foley (6-3, 195, 4.8) threw for 1,422 yards a year ago and connected for 17 TDs. He too has his pick of big-time college programs nationwide. Another great thrower in the East comes from South Orange Columbia, N.J. as Arian McGuire has put together impressive numbers the past couple of years. At 5-11, 175 pounds, McGuire obviously draws comparisons to Heisman Trophy winner Doug Flutie in stature. Statistically, McGuire threw for 1,187 yards and seven TDs a year ago, going over the 1,000-yard mark in passing for the second straight year. McGuire also impresses in the classroom with a 4.75 GPA on a 5.0 scale.

There always seems to be a great quarterback prospect in Pennsylvania and this year's superstar is Jody Dickerson of McKees Rocks. Dickerson (6-1, 180, 4.8) led his team to a state title a year ago by throwing for 1,644 yards and 15 TDs. An outstanding scrambler, Dickerson has great awareness on the field, moving around the pocket until a receiver comes open and delivering a strong, accurate pass. Penn State, Pitt and Indiana all feel Dickerson is a must. ■

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1988 NEBRASKA CORNHUSKER FOOTBALL ROSTER

(Alphabetical)

| No. | Player | Pos. | Ht. | Wt. | Class | No. | Player | Pos. | Ht. | Wt. | Class |
|-----|--------------------|------|------|-----|-------|-------------------|----------------------|------|------|-----|-------|
| 59 | *Anderson, Jeff | C | 6-4 | 270 | jr. | 65 | ***Keeler, Andy | OG | 6-3 | 265 | sr. |
| 96 | Anderson, Le Andre | DT | 6-5 | 250 | so. | 36 | Kitrell, Barry | FB | 5-10 | 215 | sr. |
| 53 | *Antoniette, Mark | OG | 6-2 | 265 | sr. | 34 | **Knox, Tyreese | IB | 5-10 | 215 | sr. |
| 18 | Avant, Tony | SE | 6-1 | 190 | jr. | 85 | *Kratzenstein, Monte | TE | 6-4 | 225 | jr. |
| 82 | *Bahe, Chip | SE | 5-10 | 175 | jr. | 46 | **Kroeker, John | P | 5-11 | 175 | sr. |
| 44 | *Barrios, Gregg | K | 5-8 | 180 | so. | 67 | Leuck, Rob | LB | 6-0 | 245 | jr. |
| 48 | Beckler, Scott | P | 6-0 | 185 | jr. | 5 | *Lewis, Tahaun | CB | 5-11 | 170 | so. |
| 21 | *Bell, Richard | WB | 6-0 | 195 | jr. | 93 | **Marco, Jon | OLB | 6-1 | 220 | sr. |
| 23 | **Blazek, Mark | S | 6-2 | 200 | sr. | 83 | *McCoy, Tim | SE | 6-1 | 170 | jr. |
| 69 | *Bobbora, Bill | OG | 6-3 | 260 | jr. | 35 | Miller, Brian | LB | 6-0 | 180 | sr. |
| 33 | ***Brinson, Dana | WB | 5-9 | 170 | sr. | 99 | Miller, Kevin | MG | 6-3 | 230 | jr. |
| 81 | *Broer, Kurt | OLB | 6-1 | 220 | sr. | 43 | ***Millikan, Todd | TE | 6-3 | 235 | sr. |
| 95 | *Brungardt, Paul | DT | 6-7 | 255 | so. | 42 | *Mills, Jeff | OLB | 6-3 | 220 | jr. |
| 37 | Buchanan, Peter | LB | 6-0 | 225 | sr. | 13 | Monarrez, Junior | MG | 6-1 | 270 | jr. |
| 49 | *Caliendo, Chris | LB | 6-3 | 240 | jr. | 74 | *Murray, Mike | MG | 5-10 | 240 | jr. |
| 29 | *Carpenter, Bryan | FB | 5-10 | 200 | jr. | 76 | *Nelson, John | OG | 6-1 | 260 | sr. |
| 32 | *Clark, Ken | IB | 5-9 | 200 | jr. | 86 | *O'Gara, Chris | TE | 6-5 | 245 | jr. |
| 1 | *Coleman, Ray | IB | 5-7 | 180 | sr. | 38 | Pickens, Bruce | CB | 5-11 | 185 | jr. |
| 17 | *Cooper, Reggie | SS | 6-3 | 200 | so. | 11 | Preston, Mike | QB | 6-0 | 160 | jr. |
| 45 | Crippen, Jon | CB | 5-10 | 165 | so. | 78 | Punt, Tom | OT | 6-8 | 270 | so. |
| 88 | *Croel, Mike | OLB | 6-3 | 215 | so. | 92 | Putnam, Sean | MG | 6-3 | 265 | sr. |
| 28 | *Custard, John | CB | 5-9 | 165 | sr. | 20 | *Rodgers, Terry | IB | 5-7 | 170 | so. |
| 98 | D'Alesio, Joe | DT | 6-6 | 235 | jr. | 64 | Roschal, John | OG | 6-3 | 260 | jr. |
| 6 | Devall, Brad | WB | 5-9 | 170 | so. | 72 | Rother, Brad | OT | 6-3 | 240 | jr. |
| 7 | Debesh, Jim | SS | 6-1 | 185 | so. | 26 | *Sanders, Marvin | CB | 6-0 | 185 | jr. |
| 90 | Doll, Tye | DT | 6-3 | 270 | jr. | 25 | *Schmidt, Sam | FB | 6-1 | 230 | jr. |
| 16 | *Drennan, Chris | K | 5-9 | 180 | jr. | 56 | Sims, Joe | DT | 6-4 | 265 | so. |
| 12 | Dunlap, Jerry | QB | 5-11 | 190 | so. | 66 | Skradis, Kurt | DT | 6-3 | 260 | sr. |
| 54 | Edeal, David | C | 6-3 | 255 | so. | 62 | **Sledge, Bob | OT | 6-2 | 270 | sr. |
| 63 | Edgren, Brian | MG | 6-1 | 260 | so. | 9 | ***Taylor, Steve | QB | 6-0 | 205 | sr. |
| 97 | Engelbert, Pat | MG | 6-2 | 235 | so. | 89 | ***Thomas, Broderick | OLB | 6-3 | 235 | sr. |
| 73 | Engstrom, Steve | OT | 6-3 | 285 | so. | 22 | Turner, Nate | SE | 6-1 | 220 | fr. |
| 47 | ***Etienne, LeRoy | LB | 6-1 | 230 | sr. | 40 | Tyrance, Pat | LB | 6-2 | 230 | so. |
| 77 | Eyman, Terry | OT | 6-6 | 265 | so. | 75 | *Valladao, Ray | DT | 6-3 | 255 | jr. |
| 51 | *Ferguson, Brad | LB | 6-1 | 215 | jr. | 41 | Vampola, Scott | SS | 5-11 | 185 | jr. |
| 52 | Fitzke, Roger | C | 6-0 | 225 | jr. | 27 | *Walker, Cartier | CB | 5-10 | 175 | sr. |
| 3 | Flowers, Leodis | IB | 5-11 | 195 | fr. | 57 | Walker, Kenny | LB | 6-4 | 230 | so. |
| 10 | ***Fryar, Charles | CB | 5-10 | 175 | sr. | 91 | *Wells, Kent | DT | 6-5 | 285 | jr. |
| 80 | Garrett, Chris | TE | 6-3 | 225 | fr. | 15 | *Wooten, Wendell | S | 6-1 | 205 | sr. |
| 14 | *Gdowski, Gerry | QB | 6-1 | 195 | jr. | 31 | *Worden, Jamie | WB | 5-10 | 175 | sr. |
| 70 | *Glaser, Doug | OT | 6-7 | 295 | jr. | 68 | **Young, Jake | C | 6-5 | 260 | jr. |
| 19 | *Gregory, Morgan | SE | 6-0 | 185 | jr. | | | | | | |
| 84 | **Griffin, Willie | DT | 6-3 | 275 | sr. | DUPLICATE NUMBERS | | | | | |
| 94 | Grobe, Corey | TE | 6-4 | 225 | sr. | 4 | Achola, George | IB | 5-10 | 190 | so. |
| 39 | Hagge, Mark | LB | 5-11 | 230 | jr. | 87 | Gawrick, Keith | TE | 6-2 | 225 | so. |
| 24 | Harchelroad, Brian | FB | 6-2 | 205 | jr. | 61 | Griffin, Mike | OT | 6-3 | 260 | jr. |
| 8 | **Hicks, Lorenzo | CB | 6-0 | 195 | sr. | 13 | Janky, Tom | P/PK | 5-11 | 180 | so. |
| 4 | *Jackson, Tim | S | 6-0 | 190 | sr. | 37 | Johnk, Tim | FB | 5-10 | 210 | so. |
| 55 | *Jobman, Randall | LB | 6-3 | 230 | jr. | 87 | Svehla, Dan | OLB | 6-0 | 215 | so. |
| 2 | Joseph, Mickey | QB | 5-10 | 170 | fr. | 61 | Wanek, Jim | MG | 6-0 | 240 | so. |

* Number of letters earned

Even the Greatest Huskers Were Once Tender Freshmen

BRIAN BOERBOOM BEGINS HIS SECOND YEAR AT NEBRASKA WITH A LOOK BACK AT HIS FRESHMAN EXPERIENCES.

University of Nebraska football players. Look at all the benefits.

They enjoy playing in front of 76,000 fans in Memorial Stadium on fall Saturdays. They have a chance at an outstanding education. Their names are recognized by nearly every citizen of the state and Big Red fans nationwide. And they can learn important aspects of life from one of the best teachers — Tom Osborne — and his coaching staff.

These rewards generally arrive during a player's third, fourth, and fifth years in Lincoln.

Before they enjoy the rewards, however, NU players must usually endure a redshirt season and that initial Cornhusker experience — being a freshman.

"It gets better, I suppose," says Brian Boerboom, a Nebraska sophomore from Colorado Springs who recently

completed his freshman campaign. "But it was a lot of fun though."

In his two-fold statement, Boerboom hints of the mixed emotions Nebraska freshman football players experience.

Some days are good, while others are not so good.

Big Red frosh learn, adjust, achieve, become frustrated, and mature at the same time, each day, Boerboom says. Every player goes through the same emotional roller coaster ride, even prior to arriving on campus.

Boerboom admits he was nervous before traveling to Lincoln in August of 1987, despite learning what to expect from the recruiting trip and friends who attended college.

Football players spend the first two weeks in Lincoln without other students around. Their first friends are team members.

"Everybody starts the same so it's pretty easy to make friends," Boerboom says.

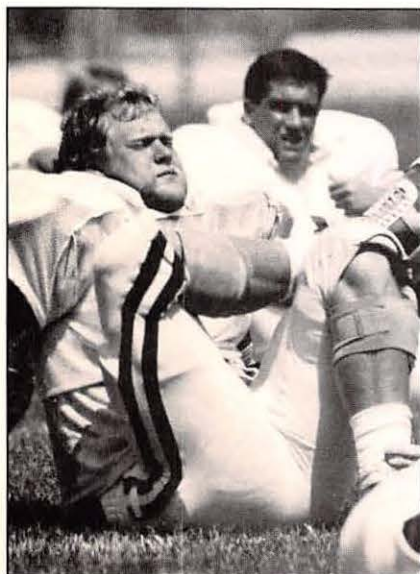
The football team lives together during pre-school practices, before splitting up to live wherever members choose. Most freshmen, Boerboom says, live in the dormitories.

Boerboom, an offensive tackle, last year roomed with Daryl Leise, a defensive player from Omaha.

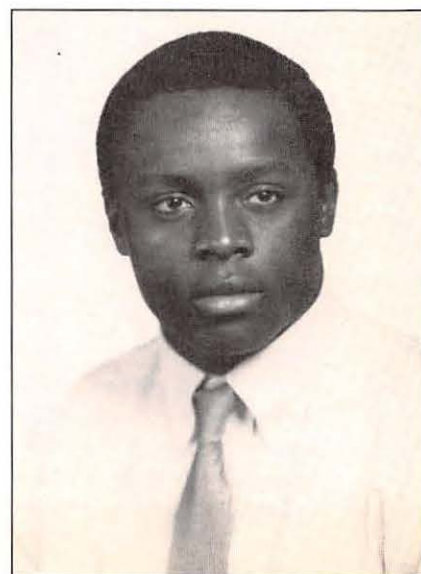
But he usually hung out with other offensive linemen.

"We play the same position and we go through practices together. Most of them have the same personality," Boerboom says. "Offensive linemen are usually close knit. I don't know about other positions."

Along with making new friends, freshman players begin football practices and learn the location of important buildings during their first weeks



Brian Boerboom (left) and George Achola went through fairly typical freshman years, each seeing plenty of JV action.



in Lincoln.

A guide gives freshman players a tour of the campus soon after they arrive, Boerboom said, so they learn where their classes are held.

First-year Huskers quickly learn other important locations, such as the training table, meeting rooms, and favorite downtown eating establishments.

Boerboom recalls first eating at the Nebraska training table.

"It's like wow. It was like, cool," he says. "The training table is great. Everybody puts on about 10 pounds. There's so much food.

"You can eat as much as you want every single time you sit down there. My mom would never make enough food."

When the Cornhusker freshmen attended their first meeting, Boerboom says they looked around the room, trying to pick out individuals they recognized.

Boerboom says he knew most of the other freshmen from reading magazines and recruiting trips.

Osborne spoke at that initial freshman meeting.

"Wow, it's Tom Osborne," says Boerboom, recalling his reaction to Osborne's attendance. The awe of listening to Coach Osborne lasted "a couple weeks. He just becomes your coach."

The enormity of Memorial Stadium soon wears off as well.

"After the first two or three practices, it's just a stadium," Boerboom says. "It's not some huge thing like it was on the recruiting trip."

Varsity coaches worked with the freshmen for four days prior to the arrival of varsity players, Boerboom says.

Many of the frosh experienced their first frustration during those four days.

"It was real frustrating when you were working with the varsity coaches. They threw the whole playbook at you in four days," Boerboom says. "The freshman coaches slowed down. We started picking it up."

Frustrations continued for the first-year players once the freshman game schedule began.

The 1987 five-game slate spanned

a period of two months. Boerboom claims players found it difficult to wait between games.

"We have quite a few scrimmages and we're learning a lot of new stuff," he says. "So it does take a while. There's nothing you can really do about it."

Frustration often accompanies adjustment and the Nebraska freshmen constantly make adjustments.

From learning to live away from the family to better time management, freshmen greatly alter their lives when they become college football players.

"It's a lot of adjusting," Boerboom says. "You have to do it right away. It's fun, though, because everything is new."

The difficulty of adjusting to Lincoln itself varies from player to player, Boerboom says, depending on the size of each one's hometown.

Schoolwork, however, requires adjustments from almost every player.

High school studies can be done almost exclusively at school, Boerboom says, while college homework must be done outside the classroom.

"You have the responsibility there (in college) to do it. Nobody's there to push you," says Boerboom, an undeclared major. "You have to do it on your own."

College grades based strictly on test scores differ considerably from high school, where daily work contributes toward a final grade.

Students also do not have as close of a relationship with their instructor in college as they did in high school.

"You don't really get to know them," Boerboom says.

Freshman football players are required to attend two-hour, evening study halls Monday through Thursday.

With classes taking up a player's mornings and football occupying most afternoons, evenings are donated to study time.

"You try to get the homework out of the way so you can go to bed early if you want to," Boerboom says. "You don't watch TV. In high school, you usually watched TV all night."

Boerboom claims the actual football portion of the freshman year did

not differ much from his days at Doherty High School.

Players go to practice, they lift, and play games. "Except everybody is your size," he says, "and everybody's as good."

NU Freshman Coach Shane Thorell elaborates, saying high school standouts find themselves in equal company in college.

"In high school, they're usually the top dog," Thorell says. "Here, it's quite a bit different. Most of them are pretty good competitors, so they don't get afraid of competition."

Boerboom adds, "It's like they say, once you get here, you're just another number. Everybody is just as good as you are."

Because of the greater number of quality athletes among NU freshmen, players must adjust their work habits.

"You have to try harder, every day you have to," Boerboom says. "You have to do it if you want to play. Some don't, but then they find out they aren't going to play. Coaches do notice it. In high school, you can take a day off."

None of the adjustments to life as a college football player are as drastic to some players as being away from mom and dad.

That often causes the most emotional hardships.

"Some players are real close to their parents," Boerboom says. "They get real homesick real quick. Some don't."

"The first semester, I was homesick. Not real bad. I kind of prepared myself."

Boerboom says players who have attended various athletic camps while in high school, as he did, grow accustomed to living away from home.

During his freshman year at Nebraska, Boerboom went home to Colorado just three times — Thanksgiving, Christmas, and spring break.

Players who live closer to Lincoln than Boerboom may return home more often, but Thorell says three trips home are typical of freshman players.

"Here at Nebraska, they're pretty busy with football," Thorell says. "There aren't that many two-week va-

cations. We keep them busy."

Because of all the adjustments and differences of college football life, an occasional freshman player considers ending his career.

Boerboom admits, "Some will talk about it (quitting)."

Once in a while, a freshman player will quit football, return home, or transfer to another school.

"It happens, but I wouldn't say it happens often," says Thorell, who lists being away from home and difference in talent among the various reasons why a player may choose to quit.

"I think it's different for each guy," he says. "We make sure we do a lot of talking to them to make sure everything is going all right."

Freshmen talk among themselves all the time, Boerboom says. Topics of conversation include whether or not they are learning the plays, how practice is going, and even girlfriends.

"We talk about each other a lot so we know each other better," Boerboom says. "We talk about home some."

From conversations, players learn where their teammates grew up and what makes them good football players.

Boerboom considers it essential to become familiar with his teammates both on and off the field. Freshmen must do so quickly.

"It takes two or three weeks just to get used to each other," he says. "You are put on a team with 60 to 70 guys you never met in your life."

Freshmen associate mostly with other freshmen, Boerboom says. They do know the redshirts because they share the same locker room, but freshmen share little contact with varsity players.

The freshman squad and varsity players practice separately, but generally at the same time, Boerboom says. "We don't see them."

As a result, the freshmen at times feel like they are members of a different team, and not the Nebraska Cornhuskers.

"It's kind of hard, but you're mostly hanging around with kids in the same situation. It's easier," Boerboom says. "We talk about what we're go-

ing to be doing in two or three years, who we are going to be playing. "Everybody has to go through it. The harder you work, the sooner (better times) are going to come."

Freshmen treasure their few encounters with Big Red stars. Boerboom fondly recalls one evening when he and a few freshmen offensive linemen met five or six varsity linemen at a party.

Boerboom remembers the varsity players, Bob Sledge, Andy Keeler, and Jeff Anderson among them, asked how things, like practice, were going.

"Pretty cool," says Boerboom in describing meetings with varsity players. "You find out they're people, too. They're just older."

Varsity players generally treat freshmen players respectfully, Boerboom says, unless the younger athlete deserves other treatment.

"If a kid thinks he belongs with the varsity guys, they'll put them in their place," he says.

First-year players watch films of varsity players while trying to learn the necessary skills of their positions.

"You look up to them," Boerboom says.

While freshman players eye varsity positions as eventual goals, they have status symbols among their peers.

Starting on the freshman squad generates a certain amount of respect from other first-year players. More admiration is given to a freshman who takes a redshirt his first year in college.

Boerboom, although Thorell labels him a fairly typical freshman, earned the near ultimate respect when he spent time practicing with the varsity once the freshman season was complete.

"Every year after the freshman season, we take up (about) 10 freshmen we feel are good players we feel can help on varsity on the scout team (etc.)," Thorell says. "Sometimes it's a reward, other times it could be we need help on varsity. Usually, it's a reward."

Both Boerboom and Thorell claim all freshman players are treated fairly by the coaching staff, regardless of

such status symbols.

Even walkon and scholarship players are the same in Boerboom's mind.

"You treat each other the same. I did," he says. "You're all on the same team. You try to help each other out."

Boerboom was one of 70 freshman players a year ago, according to Thorell. The number of players has dwindled down to the 1988 total of 65 freshmen. "Coach Osborne likes to have 40 walkons and 20 to 25 (scholarship players)," Thorell says.

Boerboom, Thorell says, was like a lot of NU offensive linemen in that he played freshman ball before taking a redshirt season, which Boerboom probably will in 1988. Boerboom and Erik Wiegert of Fremont started as the freshman offensive tackles the entire year.

Once the freshmen went through their fall season and endured the winter conditioning program, they almost dreaded spring practice.

"From what they heard about it, they weren't real anxious to go through that," Boerboom says. "It's just something you have to go through. It's something you don't want to think about."

Even with all the adjustments of being a Nebraska freshman football player, Boerboom lists the thrilling and positive moments.

One highlight, he says, is "actually playing in Memorial Stadium with someone in there."

Having never been to a Big Red game before, Boerboom enjoyed sitting at varsity contests with his freshman buddies.

Actually attending college is exciting to the Colorado Springs native.

Boerboom knows many of the benefits of being a Cornhusker lie ahead of him, now that his freshman season has ended.

He also realizes he must continue to work hard.

"We have good food and other neat things, but we put in six hours a day for half the year with football. In the spring, it's three hours a day and in the summer, we have to lift and run," Boerboom says. "We have it fine, but we don't have it great like a lot of people think." ■

Q: How do you decide which players will redshirt and whether or not these players will participate on the varsity or scout team or jayvee team? **Doug Ferry, Bernardsville, N.J.**

A: With a freshman player, we feel if he has an outstanding chance to contribute in his second year but maybe he's at a position where he'd be no better than third or fourth right now because a senior's ahead of him, we might be inclined to redshirt him.

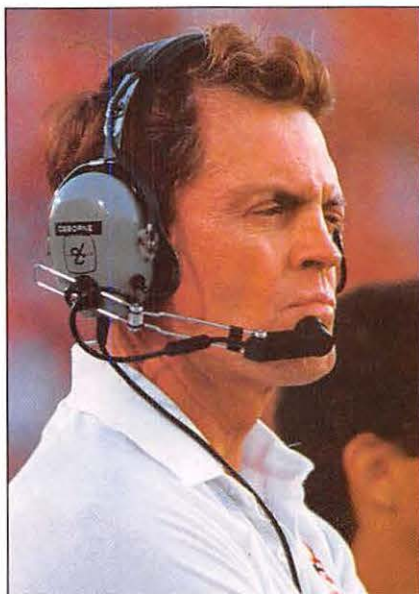
A freshman who looks like he can be either No. 1 or No. 2 this year, we'd probably play. And a player who's in his second year, who maybe played freshman ball and appears he's going to be no better than third or fourth at his position, we'd tend to talk to him about redshirting.

But redshirting's always been an optional matter. We've never made a player redshirt. We've occasionally had a player who we felt would benefit from redshirting who's chosen not to. Maybe he wants to go to medical school, but for whatever reason, he doesn't want to.

A good example is Tom Heiser, who's one of our team doctors right now. He really wanted to go to medical school. I think Tom was a two-year starter and could've been a three-year starter. But he just didn't want to prolong his education an extra year. So we didn't redshirt him as a sophomore. He played a lot as a junior and senior and sparingly as a sophomore.

Q: Because of William Perry and other huge linemen in the pros, there's been some talk of possibly setting weight limits on football linemen as a health precaution. Do you think young men getting over 290-300 pounds could hurt them some way? **Bill Branch, Encino, Calif.**

A: You can't go on just raw body weight. You have to look at their composition. It's conceivable somebody could weigh 350 pounds, have real low body fat, maybe 15 percent or under, be in good cardiovascular condition and be able to go out and run a mile and a half in 12 minutes or so. In such a case, you'd have to say that



person might not be at any great risk. But if they're 30 percent body fat, have no endurance and no cardiovascular conditioning, then I would say it's a health hazard.

One thing we talk to our players about, and we think it's important, is that sometimes players who are doing a lot of lifting on 5,000, 6,000 or 7,000 calories a day, are eating large amounts of food, in other words . . . when they're done playing if they continue to eat those large amounts of food and become less active, I think it can be very dangerous to their health. I think that's one reason they claim the average life span of a National Football League player is middle to late 50s.

It could be that in a lot of people who are very large, if they continue to carry that kind of weight and become inactive, it can be damaging. I've noticed a lot of former players, big linemen who weighed 250 or 260 pounds at one time, have dropped down to 200 to 210 pounds. They do that deliberately.

Carl Johnson would be a good example. He played here at 260 pounds, and then several years of pro football, and today he weighs 190 pounds. That's a little bit extreme. But I think the big guys who drop down to 210 to 220 pounds are doing pretty good.

Q: Who were the top players who

returned from summer vacation in the best physical condition, and how are the freshmen recruits allowed to participate in the strength program before they arrive on campus? **Gerry Stewart, Grand Island, Neb.**

A: Most of our top players returned in good physical condition. There is a conditioning class that's open to all students during the summer. Football players can sign up for that, attend like any other student and get credit for it. Many of our players did that.

As long as our facilities are available to other students, players are able to use those facilities during the summer. Incoming freshmen can enroll, too. But even the incoming scholarship freshmen have to pay their own way because the scholarship doesn't go into effect until the fall semester.

Q: Did we have a good walkon class this year, and who among the assistant coaches will be working with the walkons? **Kip Degrate, Valentine, Neb.**

A: I think it was a reasonably good walkon class. We tried to be selective. We didn't have a large group of freshmen. We ended up with about 65 freshmen players, and 23 or 24 of those were scholarship players. That's not a real large group. There's no question some of the smaller schools, and other schools like Wyoming, Iowa State and UNO, have cut into that number somewhat. That's certainly in their best interests to try to do that.

Next year, we plan to leave Dan Young primarily in the state of Nebraska so he will be actively working a little harder with scholarship and walkon players, whereas last year, he recruited Nebraska and Phoenix for scholarship players. We probably did most of our walkon recruiting on the telephone and didn't get coaches out in the potential walkons' homes as much as we'd like to.

If you have questions for Coach Osborne, please address them to "Ask Tom Osborne," P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, NE 68501. ■